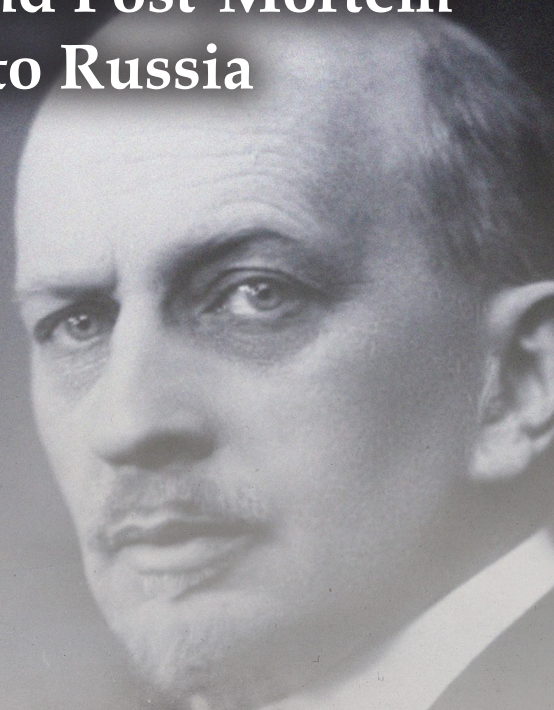


Ivan Ilyin

White Emigration, Fascist
Sympathies, and Post-Mortem
Return to Russia



Varvara Vernadskaya

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And I want to close with the words of a true patriot, Ivan Ilyin:
“If I consider Russia my Motherland, that means that I love as a Russian,
contemplate and think, sing and speak as a Russian; that I believe in the
spiritual strength of the Russian people. Its spirit is my spirit; its destiny is
my destiny; its suffering is my grief; and its prosperity is my joy.”
Behind these words stands a glorious spiritual choice ...
The truth is with us, and behind us is Russia.

—Vladimir Putin, September 30, 2022¹

For those studying the Russian political regime, it has become difficult not to see the name of the Russian thinker Ivan Ilyin (1883–1954) being increasingly mentioned as an influence on the Kremlin’s worldview. In searching for evidence of Ilyin’s major role in shaping Putin’s mind, many have referred to Mikhail Zygar’s influential book on Putin’s circles, *All the Kremlin’s Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin*. In it, Zygar cites an unidentified administration official: “The main source of Putin’s contemplations [about building capitalism] was the philosopher Ivan Ilyin. Based on Ilyin’s works, Putin placed the basic values of Russian society in this order: God, family, property.”² With Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Ilyin has once again appeared prominently in Western coverage of Putin’s actions—the piece that has had the broadest reach in the US is probably an MSNBC news show segment with the provocative title, “Mehdi Hasan Introduces You to Putin’s Favorite Fascist Philosopher.”³

But who is Ivan Ilyin, really? How has such a relatively obscure Russian émigré philosopher gained such apparent prominence? What is the exact place of the émigré thinker in the Kremlin’s ideological makeup? Anyone who might attempt to dig deeper to answer these questions would be challenged by the paucity of available resources.

While great efforts have been made to publish Ivan Ilyin’s collected works in Russian, which span 30 volumes by now, no concise biography of him has been written so far. The few articles or books devoted to Ilyin are closer to hagiography than to biography, having usually been written by figures sympathetic to—if not devotees of—Ilyin. By focusing on Ilyin’s less controversial publications and indulging in elusive details of religious philosophy, they certainly fail to single out his role as an agitator and propagandist, and hide the dark pages of his life in emigration. As for his

¹ “Signing of Treaties on Accession of Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions to Russia,” Kremlin website, September 30, 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465>.

² Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin’s Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2016), 249 (original in Russian: Mikhail Zygar, *Vsia kremliovskaia rat’: Kratkaia istoriia sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow: Al’pina Publisher, 2015).

³ MSNBC, “Mehdi Hasan Introduces You to Putin’s Favorite Fascist Philosopher,” March 21, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfVYiHY7lok>.

rehabilitation in today's Russia, it has not been studied beyond the hyped formulations advanced by Yale professor Timothy Snyder,⁴ which then get recycled in the news, such as on broadcasts like Mehdi Hasan's.

It is therefore time to delve seriously into the topic of Ivan Ilyin—his biography, his thinking, and his postmortem rehabilitation—to offer readers a sober, non-polemical, and analytical view of this key but largely unstudied member of Russia's ideological pantheon.

As we will see here, Ilyin has been far from a philosopher shut up in an academic ivory tower; on the contrary, he was a very active member of the White (anti-Bolshevist) movement's émigré circles, participating in almost all its major political organizations, especially close to the Russian All-Military Union (*Russkii obshchevoinskii soiuz*: ROVS) and the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (*Narodno-trudovoi soiuz rossiiskikh solidaristov*: NTS). Ilyin failed at securing a university position and instead specialized in ideological production: from 1921 to 1938, he gave almost 200 lectures in Germany, Latvia, Switzerland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria, and authored about 400 articles, pamphlets, and books.

One of the critical points of tension in analyzing Ilyin's legacy relates to his relationship to fascism and Nazism. Ilyin's hagiographers have been working hard at hiding his not-so-ambivalent attitudes. In 1925–1926, the Russian philosopher wrote a series of nine "Letters About Fascism," which were sympathetic to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's experience. Ilyin saw fascism as a spiritually imperfect form of White ideology. In 1928, he wrote that "fascism is an Italian secular variation of the White movement. The Russian White movement is more perfect than Italian fascism because it has a religious ethos."⁵ Ilyin had consistently supported this idea and by 1933 he argued that fascism and the White movement had a "common and united enemy, patriotism, sense of honor, voluntary-sacrificial service, an attraction to dictatorial discipline, to spiritual renewal and the revival of their country, and the search for a new social justice."⁶ He also welcomed the arrival of Nazism in Germany. On May 17, 1933, he published an article praising Hitler and the Nazis:

I categorically refuse to assess the events of the last three months in Germany from the point of view of German Jews ... What is happening in Germany is a huge political and social upheaval ... What did Hitler do? He stopped the process of Bolshevization in Germany and thereby rendered the greatest service to the whole of Europe ... The liberal-democratic hypnosis of non-

⁴ Timothy Snyder, "Ivan Ilyin, Putin's Philosopher of Russian Fascism," *New York Review of Books*, March 16, 2013, <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/03/16/ivan-ilyin-putins-philosopher-of-russian-fascism/>.

⁵ Ivan Ilyin, "O Russkom Fashizme," *Russkii Kolokol*, *Zhurnal Volevoi Idei*, 3, 1928, https://vtoraya-literatura.com/pdf/russsky_kolokol_1928_3_text.pdf.

⁶ Ivan Ilyin, "Natsional-sotsializm: Novyi dux," *Vozrozhdenie*, May 17, 1933, http://www.odinblago.ru/filosofiya/ilin/ilin_i_nacional_sociali.

resistance was thrown off. While Mussolini is leading Italy, and Hitler is leading Germany, European culture is given a respite.⁷

Ilyin would renew this analysis in his pamphlet "On Fascism" from 1948, criticizing the "mistakes" of Nazism such as hostility to religion and obsession with race, but celebrating the political project, its antisemitic elements, and praising the fascist regimes in Spain and Portugal.⁸

Contrary to what his hagiographers assert, Ilyin worked well in a Nazi environment. In the 1920s he gave lectures at numerous *völkisch* associations affiliated with the early Nazi movement, such as the National Club (Nationaler Klub) or the German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei). He collaborated with key figures of the intellectual Nazi realm such as Adolf Ehrt and the Eckart-Verlag publishing house. Ehrt joined the Nazi Party in 1931, and from 1933 to 1936 he was the managing director of Eberhard Taubert's Antikomintern—a department in Joseph Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry which, albeit briefly, employed Ilyin. In 1933, Ilyin gave lectures at the Russian-German Club (Russisch-Deutscher Klub) and took an active role in bringing the Russian Scientific Institute under the control of the Nazis. He even participated in purging it of its Jewish figures during his short directorship of it (1933–1934) before being laid-off from it.

Contrary to another widespread assertion, Ilyin did not leave Germany in 1938 as a sign of protest against the radicalization of the Nazi regime, but was expelled by the German authorities themselves, who were worried about the loyalty of White émigrés close to the NTS. Once in his second exile, in Switzerland, Ilyin continued to work with collaborationist figures such as Samuel Haas (1889–1952), a right-wing publicist and Nazi sympathizer and one of the co-founders of the Union for the People and the Homeland (Bund für Volk und Heimat, one of the leading political organizations of the Swiss fascist movement).

Ilyin took myriad initiatives to sell his skills to different authorities as long as they were anti-Soviet and, like many other members of the White émigré community, he also sought American support for his cause. Beginning in the 1920s, Ilyin developed ties to the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and at the end of the war he collaborated with the Coordinating Center of the Anti-Bolshevik Struggle, a CIA-sponsored effort to bring the most important postwar Russian émigré organizations under one umbrella. Ilyin never hid that defeating Communism at all costs was his supreme goal: in 1947, at the beginning of the Cold War, he even declared that Russian patriots should side with the US if war were to break out between it and the Soviet Union.⁹ He also very vehemently argued that

⁷ Ilyin, "Natsional-sotsializm."

⁸ Ivan Ilyin, "O fashizme" (1948), republished in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1993), 86–89.

⁹ Ivan Ilyin, "I snova izvestiia s Vostoka," in Ivan Ilyin, *Sobranie sochinenii: spravedlivost' ili ravenstvo?* (Moscow: PSTGU, 2006), 275.

the Soviet Union was not Russia and that there cannot be, per essence, any "Soviet patriotism."¹⁰

Ilyin is often celebrated in today's Russia as a philosopher of impressive depth, on par with the most famous names in German philosophy, but he was in fact a pretty average thinker, whose thought in emigration was mostly motivated by political purposes more than by philosophical ones. Ilyin's central text, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, while presenting itself as an answer to Leo Tolstoy's pacificism, should be read as an extra-canonical Russian Orthodox doctrine of just war. Translating in Russian terms the medieval Catholic theology that was used to justify the Crusades, Ilyin looks for a divine authorization for coercive violence: those representing an eschaton and fighting on the side of God—in this precise case, the Whites representing the old, anti-Soviet Russia, even if tsarism had by then disappeared—have not only the right, but the duty, to use violence against an atheist regime.

It is precisely this theological justification of violence that has seduced Russian political figures who have been rehabilitating Ilyin in today's Russia. A cluster of both political and cultural actors, often of monarchist sensibility, have been acting to rehabilitate the White movement's main ideologist even before Putin took office in 2000. The monarchist coloring of many of the pro-Ilyin memory entrepreneurs should not be read literally: while some may wish for the return of the Romanov dynasty, the majority of them use the White émigré thinker as a code for an autocratic and imperial regime, an Orthodox state religion, an essentialized opposition to the West, and the right to use violence against enemies both foreign and domestic.

How is it that such a figure - who praised Mussolini, worked with Nazi institutions, advocated a strict lustration of former members of the Soviet security services, approached American and British intelligence-related organizations, and preferred to side with the US rather than with the Soviet Union - can be erected as a part of today's Russia's national pantheon? This directly contradicts the cult of the memory of the Second World War (known as the Great Patriotic War in Russia), now an almost sacred component of state language, as well as the legal continuity between the Soviet Union and Russia—to say nothing of Putin's judgment that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century. It also creates strong dissonance with the regime's current obsession with denouncing its opponents as siding with Western actors who plot against Russia's strategic national interests.

The reintegration of the Russian émigré community into post-Soviet Russia's national pantheon belongs to a normal process of nation-building, which requires recreating the state's historical continuity and offering a plurality of interpretations of the tumultuous past of the early 20th century. Yet, the reclamation of the White political legacy, especially in its most anti-Soviet forms, sympathetic to fascism, is not about historical reconciliation

¹⁰ Ivan Ilyin, "Sovetskii Soiuz – ne Rossiia," 1947, republished at http://possev.org/jornal/izbran/?SECTION_ID=23&ELEMENT_ID=928

between Whites and Reds. It is about advancing a political agenda that is largely inspired by Russified versions of fascist principles, and which has become a rhetorical device for some Russian elites to express their political views.

This “Ilyinist” faction does not dominate the whole state structure, which, when it refers to Ilyin, does it in a very commonsensical manner with hazy quotes on Russianness. Neither has it been able to promote Ilyin to a broader audience, nor to make his works part of the new indoctrination mechanisms put in place since February 24, 2022. Rather, it is aimed mostly at speaking to the elites and the Kremlin, not to the Russian population at large. But it has succeeded at making a Russian fascist sympathizer calling for a just war against enemies of the White cause a central figure of the Russian state pantheon.

Chapter 1. A Political Biography of Ivan Ilyin

Although this biographical sketch will not remedy the need for a thorough and critical biography of Ilyin, it attempts to put a special focus on his political activism: from storing bombs for the Social Revolutionary Party in the First Russian Revolution of 1905 and funneling money to the White military efforts after the October Revolution of 1917 to becoming a major propagandist for the White cause and an ardent fascist in the interwar period, initially willing to collaborate with the Nazis; and finally, to looking for American support in the postwar period.

This chapter draws, in part, on the vast and largely unexplored archive of Ilyin available online at Moscow State University, including letters, photos, notes, and bureaucratic papers,¹¹ as well as police records and secret service files on Ilyin from Switzerland and Germany, both of which kept close track of his actions.¹² Connecting the scattered pieces of information regarding Ilyin's political activities



Ivan Ilyin in 1909.
Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

¹¹ All digitized files from Ilyin's archive at the Moscow State University are available here: "Fond № 47. Il'in Ivan Aleksandrovich (1883–1954)," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmgu.ru/search/?q=&cat=ILIN&p=8&s=TIT> \h. Material from Ilyin's archive is also presented as a "special project" on the website of the Russian Ministry of Culture: "Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in: Izgnannik i patriot," https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/.

¹² For a listing of archival material on Ilyin in Russia and Germany, see: "Ivan Iljin: Archivmaterialien," Iwan Iljin (internet project), https://web.archive.org/web/20220321121801/http://iljinru.tsygankov.ru/german/archiv/index_arch.html. The website of the Ilyin "internet project" was online from 2001 to 2022. Its advisory board included several Ilyin specialists from Russia and the US (Philip T. Grier, Vladimir Isakov, Alexis Klimov, Alexander Korolkov, Iurii Lisitsa and Daniel Tsygankov). Ivan Ilyin's dossiers at the Swiss Federal Archives: "Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers)," Reference code E4320B#1990/266#2840*, Swiss Federal Archives, <https://www.recherche.bar.admin.ch/recherche/#/en/archive/unit/3599852>; "Iljin, Iwan, 1883, Zollikon (Dossiers)," Reference code E2001D#1000/1553#5852*, Swiss Federal Archives, <https://www.recherche.bar.admin.ch/recherche/#/en/archive/unit/1727611>.

throughout the years, a different picture emerges rather than that of the “religious philosopher” who escaped the Nazis—one that makes Ilyin a central player in the militant White emigration, deeply enmeshed in anti-Bolshevik plotting throughout his adult life, as well as a fascist propagandist and ultimately an enabler of Nazism in Germany.

Early years in Russia

Ivan Aleksandrovich Ilyin was born in Moscow on March 28, 1883, as the son of the Russian lawyer Aleksandr Ilyin and his German wife, Ekaterina Schweickert (von Stadion). Both of his parents were descendants of noble families. Ilyin’s paternal great-grandfather, Ivan Ilyich Ilyin (1764–1832), served under Emperor Paul I as Collegiate Counsellor, and in 1796 he was bestowed the rank of nobility. Ilyin’s paternal grandfather, Ivan Ivanovich Ilyin (1799–1865), was a military man and civil engineer who built the Grand Kremlin Palace, then became its caretaker and commandant. His grandfather’s family lived in the Kremlin, where Ilyin’s father Alexander Ivanovich Ilyin (1851–1921) was born, whose godfather was none other than Emperor Alexander II. Alexander Ilyin was a provincial secretary and became an attorney of the District of the Moscow Court of Justice in 1885. He inherited the large estate of his mother, Lyubov Petrovna Ilyina (née Puzyreva) (1811–1885), in Bolshie Polyany, and was a follower of Leo Tolstoy’s teachings.

Ilyin’s mother, née Caroline Louise Schweickert von Stadion (1858–1942), came from an old German noble family. Originally from Wittenberg, her father, Julius Schweickert von Stadion (1807–1876), became a pioneer of homeopathy in Russia.¹³ She converted from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy after her wedding in 1880 to Ilyin’s father and adopted the name Ekaterina Yulyevna Ilyina. Ivan Alexandrovich was the third of the Ilyins’ five sons: his older brothers were Alexei (1880–1913) and Alexander (b. 1882), and his younger brothers were Julius (1889–1901) and Igor (1892–1937). Very little is known about their fate, apart from most of them studying law, as their father did. Alexei and Julius died young, while full dates of his older brother Alexander’s life are missing.¹⁴

¹³ For a detailed line of Ilyin’s ancestors see Iurii Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk,” *Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il’ina* (1883–1954), <https://web.archive.org/web/20201021123031/http://nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-ZHIZNEOPISANIE/zhizneopisanie-k-b-o.html>.

¹⁴ Lisitsa, “Kratkiy biograficheskii ocherk.”

Ilyin's brother Igor is known to have stayed in the Soviet Union after the Russian Civil War where he worked as a legal advisor for the Industrial Cooperative Society "Chulochtriko-tazhremont." He was shot on November 19, 1937 for "counter-revolutionary agitation" and rehabilitated on March 5, 1957.¹⁵

Education



The Ilyin family (from left to right): Alexander, Julius, Ekaterina Yulyevna, Alexei, Alexander Ivanovich, Igor (on his father's lap), Ivan. Before 1900 (From the family archive of Irakli Andronikov). Source: Nasledie Iljina website

Ivan Ilyin was brought up in Naryshkin Lane, in the center of Moscow, not far from the Kremlin. After obtaining his baccalaureate in 1901, following in his father's footsteps, Ilyin enrolled at the Faculty of Law of the Imperial University of Moscow, although he personally wanted to study philology.¹⁶ Having no passion for jurisprudence, he was drawn to the encyclopedia of law course by Pavel Novgorodtsev (1866–1924), which, according to Ilyin, provided "an obscure introduction to the philosophy of idealism."¹⁷

¹⁵ "Spiski zhertv — Il'in Igor' Aleksandrovich," Zhertvy politicheskogo terrora v SSSR, <https://base.memo.ru/person/show/2643014>.

¹⁶ Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Pis'ma. Memuary (1939–1954)* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1999), 352.

¹⁷ Ilyin, *Pis'ma. Memuary*, 352.

Novgorodtsev was the figurehead of the so-called “Moscow School of Legal Philosophy,” with which also Ilyin’s later professor and mentor, Prince Evgeny Nikolaevich Trubetskoy (1863–1920), was associated.¹⁸

In his classes, Novgorodtsev emphasized philosophers such as Plato, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel. Ilyin was a keen student who absorbed his professor’s lessons. Novgorodtsev was impressed by Ilyin’s final essay from 1906 on “The Ideal State of Plato in Connection with His Philosophical Outlook.”¹⁹ Subsequently, Ilyin became a part of Novgorodtsev’s extracurricular discussion circle as well as his protégé.²⁰

According to his contemporaries’ memoirs, during that period, Ilyin identified as a “Russian German.” He was mostly interested in German classical philosophy—the works of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel. Being half German, he was fluent in the language, and was able to read the original texts. In regard to Russian influences, Yuri Lisitsa mentions that among Ilyin’s “spiritual authorities from the past were Pushkin, Gogol, Tyutchev, Dostoevsky, A. K. Tolstoy, Theophanes the Recluse; as well as Professor V. I. Guerrier, Prince E. N. Trubetskoy, and his scientific supervisor P. I. Novgorodtsev from among contemporaries.”²¹

Both of Ilyin’s most influential teachers, Novgorodtsev and Trubetskoy, were heavily involved in Russian politics in the run-up to the Russian Revolution of 1905. Although there are no indications that Ilyin was involved in any of his professors’ early political endeavors, not long after the 1905 Revolution, he joined their cause.

Novgorodtsev was a member of the council of the Union of Liberation (*Soiuz osvobodzheniia*), an illegal political movement rallying for the introduction of a constitutional monarchy in Russia. It included several figures that became prominent in White exile, such as Pyotr Struve (1870–1944), Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948), Semyon Frank (1877–1950), and Sergei Bulgakov (1871–1944), all of whom Ilyin would eventually meet during his life.²²

¹⁸ Daniel Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin: Biografie Und Übersicht Über Die Wissenschaftliche Und Literarische Tätigkeit,” Ivan Iljin (internet project), https://web.archive.org/web/20220322233820/http://iljin.ru.tsygankov.ru/german/biography_d.html.

¹⁹ Ivan Ilyin, *Ideal’noe gosudarstvo Platona v sviazi s ego filosofskim mirovozzreniem* (84 pages, 1906). Referenced in Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

²⁰ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

²¹ Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

²² Struve, Berdyaev, and Bulgakov were former Marxists who in the early 1900s made a turn towards Russian Orthodoxy and the Right. They saw their political aims not fulfilled in the 1905 revolution. As formulated in the publication *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*) from 1909, to which Struve, Berdyaev, Bulgakov and Frank, contributed, they vouched for making religion the foundation of a new Russian state. Nikolai Berdyaev (ed.), *Vekhi - Landmarks: A Collection Of Articles About The Russian Intelligentsia* (Armonk, New York & London: M. E. Sharpe, 1994),

In 1905, alongside most members of the Union of Liberation, Novgorodtsev joined the Constitutional Democratic Party ("Cadets") founded in October of that year, which strove for moderate reforms towards a constitutional monarchy while at the same time rallying against the left, and he also became a deputy of the First State Duma. After the dissolution of the Duma the following year, Novgorodtsev signed the Vyborg Appeal of July 1906, along with many other deputies, calling for passive resistance against the authorities; he was subsequently convicted and sentenced to three months in prison. After his release, he toned down his political activities for a few years in order to preserve his academic career.

Ilyin's other professor at the Law Faculty, Evgeny Trubetskoy, was also heavily engaged in politics. Like Novgorodtsev, Trubetskoy was initially a member of the Cadet Party, but quickly switched to the short-lived Party of Peaceful Renovation, which he co-founded in June 1906 (dissolved 1907), whose constitutional monarchist and right-wing platform was only mildly different from the Cadets. Before being appointed professor of legal encyclopedia and history of legal philosophy at Moscow University in 1906, Trubetskoy had been a professor of law at Kiev University since 1897. In his twenties, he became a follower of the theologian Vladimir Solovyev (1853–1900), a figurehead of the so-called Russian Religious Renaissance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that found fertile ground among the Russian Empire's reactionary elites. Since its inception in 1905/1906, Trubetskoy was a member of the Council of the Moscow Religious and Philosophical Society (in Memory of Vladimir Solovyov), which brought together a heterogeneous group of theists, including the aforementioned Semyon Frank, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Sergey Bulgakov, as well as symbolists, theosophists, and anthroposophists.

Trubetskoy, Solovyov, Frank, Berdyaev, and Bulgakov were all proponents of an intellectual current called the Russian Religious Philosophy (RRP) that emerged from within the Russian Religious Renaissance. By today's standards, its output would be classified as a form of theology, (ab)using philosophical concepts to legitimize and promote Christian Orthodoxy. With atheism gaining ground in the burgeoning Soviet Union, many RRP proponents were affiliated with the counter-revolutionary and anti-communist milieu, and many were exiled by the Soviet government on the so-called Philosopher Ships in 1922, including Ilyin. After that, the RRP current became prevalent among the Russian diaspora.

Social Revolutionary Party

It was during his last years of undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Law that the first Russian Revolution of 1905 broke out, which politicized the young Ilyin. In that period, he briefly dabbled with anarchism and was involved in the terrorist activities perpetrated by the Social Revolutionary Party (SR).

The SR's history goes back to a conspiratorial organization from the late 1870s called Narodnaia Volia (People's Will), from which the SR inherited its terrorist traits. Until about 1909, the SR relied heavily on assassinations of public officials to pressure the Tsarist government into political concessions. Agents of the party's terrorist branch, the SR Combat Organization, assassinated two Interior Ministers, Dmitry Sipyagin and Vyacheslav von Plehve; the Emperor's uncle, Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich; and other high-ranking officials.

A high school friend and fellow revolutionary traveler, Mark Vishnyak, claimed that as early as December 1904, Ilyin took part in student demonstrations and was once detained by the police. Vishnyak remarked that he passed on the opportunity to chair the SR student organization in favor of Ilyin.²³ Another acquaintance from Ilyin's student years, Nikolai Nikolaevich Alekseev, recounted a story from 1905 when he visited Ilyin at his small house on Molchanovka street. During his visit, another man unknown to Alekseev handed a basket full of bombs to Ilyin, an incident confirmed by Ilyin's cousin, the writer Liubov Gurevich (1866–1940).²⁴

In the year that Ilyin was facilitating SR terrorism, the party split into two camps after Emperor Nicholas II's October Manifesto, which gave way to the first Duma. The majority was represented by Yevno Azef (1869–1918)—a double agent and employee of the Tsarist Security Department—who spoke out in favor of ending the terror and dissolving the Combat Organization. The minority, led by Boris Savinkov (1879–1925), was for intensifying terror in order to finish off Tsarism.

Although it remains unclear how Ilyin positioned himself following the split, his experience with the SR kicked off his first attempts at writing political propaganda. In 1906, he published three political pamphlets with the Moscow publishing house Labor and Will (*Trud i Volia*) under the pseudonym N. Ivanov ("From Russian Antiquity: Stenka Razin's Rebellion"; "What Is a Political Party";



Liubov Gurevich (1866–1940).
Source: Wiki Commons

²³ Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Put' dukhovnogo obnoveniia. Osnovy khristianskoy kul'tury. Krizis bezbozhiia* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1996), 9–10.

²⁴ Ilyin, *Put' dukhovnogo obnoveniia*, 9.

and “Freedom of Assembly and Popular Representation”).²⁵

Ilyin’s affiliation with the SR was brief. In 1906, when he married and embarked on an academic career, he notably toned down his political activities and focused on his academic writings, alongside numerous articles and book reviews which appeared in Moscow journals and newspapers. According to his cousin Gurevich, in the decade to come, Ilyin’s “revolutionary allures in the student years, storing bombs for the SRs in his house,” shifted to “an extreme right attitude,” when Ilyin increasingly leaned towards the Cadets.²⁶

Liubov Gurevich

Gurevich, who had an important influence on Ilyin in those years, has been called “Russia’s most important woman literary journalist” in the early twentieth century.²⁷ Ilyin had a very close relationship with his cousin, to whom he confided intimate details about his life in their extensive exchange of letters.²⁸ Starting in 1905, Gurevich worked for thirty years as an advisor and editor to the famous Russian theater director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863–1938). It was likely due to Gurevich’s inspiration that Ilyin became a theater buff in his student years. He regularly frequented the Moscow Art Theater and, according to Lisitsa, “sought to become the spiritual leader and ideological mentor of Stanislavski’s troupe.”²⁹

From 1891 to 1899, Gurevich was the publisher and chief editor of the monthly journal *Severnyi Vestnik*, a leading publication of Russian symbolism.³⁰ In 1909, Gurevich started writing for Pyotr Struve’s *Russkaia mysl*, the same year that Ilyin began contributing to the magazine. From 1912 until WWI, she served as the head of *Russkaia mysl*’s literary department.³¹

Natalia Vokach

²⁵ N. Ivanov, *Iz russkoi stariny. Bunt Sten’ki Razina* (Moscow: Knigoizdatel'stvo «Trud i Volia», 1906); N. Ivanov, *Chto takoye politicheskaya partiia* (Moscow: Knigoizdatel'stvo «Trud i Volia», 1906); N. Ivanov, *Svoboda sobranii i narodnoe predstavitel'stvo* (Moscow: Knigoizdatel'stvo «Trud i Volia», 1906).

²⁶ Liubov Gurevich quoted in Ilyin, *Put' dukhovnogo obnoveniia*, 9.

²⁷ Stanley J. Rabinowitz, “No Room of Her Own: The Early Life and Career of Liubov’ Gurevich,” *The Russian Review* 57 (April 1998): 236–252, 236.

²⁸ The correspondence between Ilyin and Gurevich is available in Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Dnevnik, Pisma, Dokumenty (1903–1938)* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1999).

²⁹ Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

³⁰ Rabinowitz, “No Room of Her Own,” 246, 251.

³¹ E. Kozmina (ed.), “Gurevich, Liubov Iakovlevna,” in *Bio-i slovar' russkikh pisateley XX veka* (Moscow, 1928), 112–114,

<https://viewer.rsl.ru/ru/rsl01000870281?page=120&rotate=0&theme=white>.

Ilyin graduated on May 25, 1906, with top grades and, on the recommendation of Prince Trubetskoy, was presented the opportunity to continue his Master's degree at Moscow University with the prospect of a future teaching position. Before returning to university, on August 27, 1906, Ilyin married Natalia Nikolaevna Vokach (1882–1963), a graduate of the Moscow Higher Women's School, where Novgorodtsev had taught since 1900.



Natalia Nikolaevna Vokach (1882–1963). Source: Wiki Commons

Vokach descended from an upper-class family as well. Her father, Nikolai Antonovich Vokach (1857–1905), was a Doctor of Law and academic secretary distantly related to the noble de Witte family. Her mother, Maria Andreevna Muromtseva (b. 1856), was the sister of Sergei Andreevich Muromtsev (1850–1910), Chairman of the First State Duma, as well as of Nikolai Andreevich Muromtsev (1852–1933), a member of the Moscow City Council. Ilyin's wife was a writer in her own right, who authored several works on philosophy, art criticism, and history.³² Their relationship has been described as very close throughout their childless marriage.³³ In September 1906, Ilyin started his Master's degree in the Department of Legal Encyclopedia and History of Legal Philosophy headed by Trubetskoy since that year.³⁴ Between 1906 and 1909, Ilyin handed in six essays addressing specific aspects of the philosophies of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Rousseau, and Aristotle, among other subjects.³⁵

Starting in 1906, at times with the help of his wife, Ilyin translated several books, including Georg Simmel's *On Social Differentiation* (1890) and two books on anarchism: Rudolf Stammeler's *The Theory of Anarchism* (1894) and Paul Eltzbacher's *Anarchism* (1900). In that context, in 1906, Ilyin met the

³² "Personenverzeichnis: Vokatsch-Iljina, Natalia Nikolaevna" Iwan Iljin (internet project), <https://web.archive.org/web/20221005165922/http://iljinru.tsygankov.ru/german/go/persons.html#V>.

³³ Lisitsa, "Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk."

³⁴ Tsygankov, "Iwan Iljin."

³⁵ Ilyin worked on six unpublished essays between 1906 and 1909: Uchenie Shellinga ob absoliutnom; Ideia konkretnogo i abstraktnogo v teorii poznaniia Gegelia; Ideia obshchei voli u Zhan-Zhaka Russo; Metafizicheskie osnovy ucheniia Aristotelia o Doulos Fysei; Problema metoda v sovremennoi iurisprudentsii. Referenced in Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Kto my. O revoliutsii. O religioznom krizise nashikh dnei* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 2001), 244.

78-year-old Leo Tolstoy, whom he asked to write a preface for his translation of Eltzbacher's tract. Tolstoy, however, declined the offer upon laying out his arguments against anarchism.³⁶

It is not evident how these translation opportunities arose, i.e., whether Ilyin chose the titles out of personal interest and then pitched them to publishers, or whether his professors were involved in any way. It is known that in the case of the legal philosopher Rudolf Stammler, Trubetskoy recommended Ilyin read his works in 1907 in order to learn more about the different directions of neo-Kantianism.³⁷ That year, Ilyin wrote a review of Rudolf Stammler's *Economy and Law According to the Materialist Conception of History* for the journal *Kriticheskoe obozrenie*.³⁸ A few years later, Novgorodtsev recommended that Ilyin should attend some of Stammler's lectures in Germany.³⁹ The Ilyins also translated two books by Rousseau in 1908, one of Novgorodtsev's favorite philosophers, but they were never published.⁴⁰

Besides translations, between 1907 and 1909, Ilyin wrote numerous book reviews for journals and newspapers, such as *Kriticheskoe obozrenie*, *Russkaia mysl*, and *Russkie Vedomosti*. The works reviewed included authors that Ilyin academically focused on, such as Fichte, Schelling, Stammler, and Max Stirner, but also authors he despised, such as Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.⁴¹ In those three years, Ilyin published none of his own writing.

After finishing his Master's degree in the Philosophy of Law at Moscow University in May 1909, Ilyin began teaching the history of legal philosophy at the private Moscow Women's Law College. In November 1909, Ilyin gave two trial lectures at the Imperial University in Moscow in order to qualify as an adjunct lecturer (*Privatdozent*). The subjects were: "The idea of personality in the doctrine of Stirner," prescribed by the university, and "The question about force and law as a legal problem," a

³⁶ Lisitsa, "Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk."

³⁷ "Ivan Aleksandrovich Il'in: Materialy iz Rossiiskogo Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo Arkhiva," Iwan Iljin (internet project), <https://web.archive.org/web/20220321121826/http://iljinru.tsygankov.ru/archiv/rgia.html>. Rudolf Stammler was mainly known for his publication "Economy and Law" in which he stipulated that the economy constitutes the matter of social life, while law represents its form. During the Nazi era, Stammler became a member of the Committee for Legal Philosophy of the Academy for German Law founded by Hans Frank, which was tasked with the nazification of the German law. Among the founding members of the Committee were also Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt and Alfred Rosenberg.

³⁸ Ivan Ilyin, "Rudolf Shtammler: Khoziaistvo i pravo s tochki zreniia materialisticheskogo ponimaniia istorii," *Kriticheskoe Obozrenie*, Issue IV, Moscow, 1907, 56–61.

³⁹ Tsygankov, "Iwan Iljin."

⁴⁰ *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1751) and *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1755). Referenced in Tsygankov, "Iwan Iljin."

⁴¹ Referenced in Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, "Bibliografiia: Otdel'nye izdaniia I. A. Il'ina."

topic chosen by Ilyin. His performance was deemed excellent, and in 1910 Ilyin started teaching at the Faculty of Law while simultaneously preparing for a PhD.⁴²

That year, he joined the Moscow Psychological Society (1885–1922, reestablished 1957), presumably on the advice of Novgorodtsev, who was an active member.⁴³ Unlike its name suggests, rather than psychology, the Society focused on discussions about religion, “religious philosophy,” and mysticism. Ilyin published excerpts of his first major article, “The Concepts of Law and Force,” in the Society’s journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, to which he contributed frequently between 1910 and 1917.⁴⁴

In late 1910, Ilyin went on a two-year study trip to Germany, Italy, Austria, and France with his wife to work on his doctoral thesis about the “Crisis of the Rationalist Philosophy of Law.” However, in the course of his trip, Ilyin decided to change the subject to “Hegel’s Philosophy as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Man.”⁴⁵

Novgorodtsev recommended a strict itinerary for Ilyin’s trip:

Mr. Ilyin is advised to study at the universities of Berlin, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Halle, Göttingen, Marburg and Paris. ...he is advised to pay attention, on the one hand, to the general courses of the history of philosophy and epistemology, and, on the other hand, to the courses devoted especially to the philosophy of law and the logic of the social sciences. Mainly he must attend lectures by Simmel and Münsterberg in Berlin, Windelband and Lask in Heidelberg, Stammler in Halle, Cohen and Natorp in Marburg, Butroux and Bougle in Paris. Considering his future professorship, Mr. Ilyin should pay attention to teaching methods and especially to the way courses are taught in practice. For this purpose, he is especially advised to attend the practice classes of Windelband and Jellinek in Heidelberg, Rickert in Freiburg, Stammler in Halle, Cohen and Natorp in Marburg.⁴⁶

In mid-1911, Ilyin was in touch with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl since he wanted to better understand his phenomenological method.⁴⁷ He attended some of Husserl’s lectures, alongside the French-Russian philosopher Alexander Koyré (1892–1964). During his study trip,

⁴² Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

⁴³ Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

⁴⁴ Ivan Ilyin, “Poniatiia prava i sily: opyt metodologicheskogo analiza,” *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, Vol. 101(1), No. 21, Moscow, January / February 1910, 1–38.

⁴⁵ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

⁴⁶ Pavel Novgorotsev, “Instruktsiia I. A. Iliinu ot 22.10.1909,” Russian State Historical Archive, Fond 733, Dir. 153, File 376, quoted in Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

⁴⁷ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

he also got to know the psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), with whom he later corresponded.⁴⁸ In 1911, Ilyin met Sigmund Freud in Vienna, and he subsequently familiarized himself with the fundamentals of psychoanalysis.⁴⁹

During the course of his travels, Ilyin only published a few articles, notably “The Idea of Personality in the Teachings of Stirner—Experience in the History of Individualism” in 1911, and in 1912, his Russian article “The Concepts of Law and Force” appeared in a German translation.⁵⁰

Upon his return to Moscow in 1912, Ilyin continued teaching at the Department of Legal Encyclopedia and History of Legal Philosophy as a private lecturer and taught in other higher education institutions in Moscow. From 1912 onwards, he focused strongly on Hegel and wrote numerous articles on aspects of Hegel’s writings as a basis for his future dissertation, most of which were published in the journal of the Moscow Psychological Society, *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*. One of his first lectures in February 1914 was titled “Hegel’s Teaching on the Nature of the Speculative Way of Thinking.”⁵¹

In 1912, Ilyin’s collaboration with Pyotr Struve’s *Russkaia mysl* intensified, and he contributed numerous articles until the magazine’s temporary closure in 1927. Although it is not known when Struve and Ilyin first crossed paths, Richard Pipes mentions that by 1913 they were friends.⁵² The two would come to collaborate closely in exile throughout the interwar period and into the Nazi era. In 1905, Struve became a member of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party and stood at the head of its right wing. In 1907, Struve started to co-edit *Russkaia mysl* alongside Alexander Kizevetter, and in 1911, he became the magazine’s sole publisher and editor.⁵³ *Russkaia mysl* was often called the organ of the Cadet Party, although Struve himself denied this.⁵⁴

The First World War caused a patriotic, as well as religious, upsurge in Ilyin, and he addressed the subject in various articles and pamphlets, such

⁴⁸ Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.” The author could not locate this correspondence.

⁴⁹ Tsygankov, “Ivan Ilyin.”

⁵⁰ Ivan Ilyin, “Ideia lichnosti v uchenii Shtirnera. Opyt po istorii individualizma,” *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, Moscow, January/February 1911, Vol. 106 (1), 55–93; Ivan Ilyin “Die Begriffe von Recht und Kraft,” *Archiv für systematische Philosophie*, Berlin, 1912, Volume 18, Issue 1, 63–88; *Ibid.*, Issue 2, 125–144.

⁵¹ Tsygankov, “Ivan Ilyin.”

⁵² Richard Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right, 1905–1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 161.

⁵³ Aleksej A. Gaponenkov, “B. Stryuve - redaktor zhurnala Russkaia mysl' (1907–1918),” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 37, No. 4 (1996): 505–13, 505, https://www.persee.fr/doc/cmr_1252-6576_1996_num_37_4_2478. Kizevetter was expelled from Russia in 1922, alongside Ilyin, and the two worked together at the Russian Scientific Institute.

⁵⁴ Gaponenkov, “B. Stryuve,” 506–507.

as "The Basic Moral Contradiction of War" (1914) and "The Spiritual Meaning of War" (1915).⁵⁵ In those texts, Ilyin developed convictions that he would later elaborate in greater detail: that it is not only patriotic and a right, but also a religious duty to "resist to evil by force," i.e., to support the military efforts of the Tsarist empire. The tendency to fold his religious and political beliefs into philosophical arguments also found expression in his articles, such as "Philosophy as Spiritual Activity" published in 1915 in *Russkaia mysl'*.⁵⁶

While political and religious propaganda dominated his literary output, in the years preceding the October Revolution, Ilyin published only a few texts and reviews in his academic field. Most notably in 1915, alongside three other Russian jurists, Ilyin contributed to a legal textbook, *General Doctrine of Law and State / Fundamentals of Jurisprudence*, outlining "the basic concepts of Russian state, civil and criminal law."⁵⁷

In this period, Ilyin became a prominent orator and polemicist who went ferociously after his enemies. His wife's cousin, Evgeniya Gerzyk, noted: "The ability to hate, despise, insult ideological opponents was particularly pronounced in Ilyin, and he was known for those traits by Muscovites in those years...."⁵⁸ His wrath was particularly directed against proponents of the so-called Silver Age of Russian Poetry (ca. 1890–1917), a literary current represented by figures such as Nikolai Berdyaev, Maximilian Voloshin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and Andrei Bely.⁵⁹ He rallied against the movement's "sick" interest in sexuality, which he deemed at the heart of Russian intellectual decay and as one of the factors that gave way to Bolshevism.⁶⁰

In the mid-1910s, Ilyin became a close friend of Nikolai K. Medtner (1880–1951), the "composer and clairvoyant," as Ilyin dubbed him, and his wife Anna M. Medtner (1877–1965). Ilyin corresponded frequently with both of them between 1915 and 1953.⁶¹ Ilyin was also acquainted with the

⁵⁵ Ivan Ilyin, "Osnovnoe нравственное protivorechie voyny," *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, Moscow, 1914, Vol. 125 (5), No. 25, 797–826; Ivan Ilyin, *Dukhovnyi smysl voyny* (Moscow: I. D. Sytina, 1915).

⁵⁶ Ivan Ilyin, "Filosofiia kak dukhovnoe delanie," *Russkaia mysl'*, Moscow, 1915, Issue 36, 112–128.

⁵⁷ I. A. Ilyin, V. M. Ustinov, I. B. Novitsky and M. N. Gernet, *Obshchee uchenie o prave i gosudarstve / Osnovy zakonovedeniia. Chast' I* (Moscow: Izd-vo tovarishchestva «V.V. Dumnov, nasled. br. Salaievykh», 1915); Tsygankov, "Ivan Il'in."

⁵⁸ Evgeniya Gerzyk, *Vospominaniia* (Paris, 1973), 154, quoted in Tsygankov, "Ivan Il'in."

⁵⁹ Tsygankov, "Ivan Il'in;" Lisitsa, "Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk."

⁶⁰ Tsygankov, "Ivan Il'in."

⁶¹ "I.A. Il'in. Pis'ma k N.K. i A.M. Metneram v shutochnykh stikhakh i proze [1915–1947]," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-pisma-k-n-k-i-a-m-metneram-v-shutochnyh-stihakh-i-proze; "Ivan Il'in Papers Detailed Box by Box Description," Michigan State University,

composer's older brother Emil K. Medtner (1872–1936), to whom Anna Medtner was first married, and who later became a point of contact for Ilyin in Switzerland. According to Magnus Ljunggren, Emil Medtner, a “theorist of symbolism,” was “a patient and friend of Carl Gustav Jung and one of the first Russian supporters of psychoanalysis,” whose “love triangles” were discussed by Freud and Jung.⁶² It had been Ilyin who in 1913 recommended Medtner consult Freud in Vienna.⁶³ In 1914, Medtner moved to Zurich and, with money from the Rockefeller Foundation, helped translate Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* into Russian.⁶⁴ Jung may also have been influenced by Medtner's racial, antisemitic, and fascist ideas and his enthusiasm for Mussolini and Hitler.

Revolutionary Years

Ilyin initially welcomed the February Revolution of 1917, and he supported the short-lived Provisional Government led by Alexander Kerensky. Ilyin became chairman of a district committee organizing elections to the Constituent Assembly in the Moscow region and was elected chairman of the Lecturer Association of Moscow University.⁶⁵

In 1917, the number of Ilyin's publications rose considerably. In several small pamphlets issued by the publishing house Biblioteka Narodnoy Svobody (Library of People's Freedom), Ilyin addressed the political events at the time and sharply criticized the Bolsheviks, particularly their anti-war stance.⁶⁶ In the wake of the October Revolution, under the pseudonym Justus (“justice”), which he came to use frequently, Ilyin published a series of rabidly anti-Bolshevik propaganda pieces in the newspaper *Ulro Rossii*.⁶⁷

After the October Revolution, Ilyin remained a fierce opponent of the Bolsheviks. He welcomed the resistance of the Moscow Junkers and anti-Bolshevik students against the military Red Guard in November 1917. In late 1917, he wrote a homage to the killed “White comrades” as the true winners of the revolution (“To the Departed Winners”).⁶⁸ Therein, Ilyin

https://web.archive.org/web/20070812021435/http://www.lib.msu.edu/coll/main/sp ec_col/writer/ilin/ilinnew.htm.

⁶² Magnus Ljunggren, “Emilii Metner v zhizni i snovideniakh (dve zametki k teme),” *Russian Literature*, vol. 77, no. 4 (May 15, 2015): 409–17, 412–414.

⁶³ Ljunggren, “Emilii Metner,” 413.

⁶⁴ Magnus Ljunggren, *The Russian Mephisto: A Study of the Life and Work of Emilii Medtner* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 121–122.

⁶⁵ Tsygankov, “Ivan Il'in”; “2-2. I. Il'in. Avtobiografiia. 1941. (Il'in I. Curriculum Vitae). - 121,” Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbgmu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-2-002.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, “Bibliografiia: Otdel'nye izdaniia I. A. Il'ina.”

⁶⁷ Referenced in Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, “Bibliografiia: Otdel'nye izdaniia I. A. Il'ina.” Ilyin used the pseudonyms Justus and Peter Justus (“stone of justice”) frequently. See: Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

⁶⁸ I. L. [pseudonym of Ivan Ilyin], “Ushedshim pobediteliu,” *Russkie vedomosti*, No. 249, Moscow, November 1917.

picked up on his thoughts from WWI, ascribing the right to “resistance to evil by force” to the White counterrevolutionaries. In lectures and speeches, he tried to rally for a continued Russian military engagement, notably in a speech “On Patriotism” delivered in February 1918 at a public meeting of the Society of Junior Teachers of Moscow University.⁶⁹

Amidst the revolutionary upheaval, on May 19, 1918, Ilyin defended his dissertation in front of Novgorodtsev and Trubetskoy, and received his doctorate.⁷⁰ According to historian and Ilyin specialist Daniel Tsygankov:

Ilyin’s dissertation interpreted the earthly existence as having two aspects: the first one being the absolute solitude of man; and the second, the absolute spiritual unity of man. The law represents the individual’s inclination towards this unity. The world is an embodiment of the God-being; but God, once creating the world, could not overcome evil. Only man as a higher embodiment of the divine being can fight and defeat evil. Therefore, people bear the absolute responsibility for good and evil in this world.⁷¹

After the publication of the dissertation in 1918 and until Ilyin’s forced exile in 1922, only one other work is recorded: *The Doctrine of Legal Consciousness*, which was composed in 1919 but only published after his death.⁷² This considerable gap in productivity indicates that Ilyin, although still teaching philosophy of law at Moscow University, largely abandoned his academic trajectory after the October Revolution. Nonetheless, in 1921, he was elected a member of the presidium of the Philosophy of Law Association.⁷³ Some of his time went into maintaining the Moscow Psychological Society, of which he was elected chairman in May 1920 after the previous director had died. However, he failed to resurrect the almost defunct Society.⁷⁴

Volunteer Army

Ilyin’s limited academic engagement left him plenty of time for his counterrevolutionary activities. Following the outbreak of the Russian Civil War, Ilyin reached out to one of the generals of the Volunteer Army

⁶⁹ Ivan Ilyin, “O patriotizme,” in Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Spravedlivost’ ili ravenstvo* (Moscow: Pravoslavnyi Sviato-tikhonovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2006), 353 ff.

⁷⁰ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

⁷¹ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin,” referencing Dimitrij Tschizhevski (ed.), *Hegel bei den Slaven* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), 360–368.

⁷² Ivan Ilyin, *Filosofia Gegelia kak uchenie o konkretnosti Boga i cheloveka* (2 volumes) (Moscow: Ed. G.A. Lemana i S.I. Sakharova, 1918); Ivan Ilyin, *Uchenie o pravosoznanii* (1919, unpublished).

⁷³ Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, “2-2. I. Il’in. Avtobiografiia. 1941.”

⁷⁴ L. N. Zhdan, “Moskovskoe psikhologicheskoe obshchestvo (1885–1922),” *Voprosy psikhologii*, No. 4 (March 1995): 82–92, 86, <http://www.voppsy.ru/issues/1995/954/954082.htm>.

in Southern Russia, Mikhail Alekseyev (1857–1918), and secretly collected money for the Whites in Moscow. In 1918, he was arrested three times for his work for the Volunteer Army, however, he was acquitted each time for a lack of evidence.⁷⁵ According to Lisitsa:

In fact, Ilyin had indeed received a large sum of money from the American Vladimir Bari—8,000 rubles for the needs of the underground organization “Volunteer Army,” as evidenced by his own handwritten note on Bari’s payment slip. During the investigation Ilyin explained that money was given to him in order to publish a book on Hegel’s philosophy, but when the publisher G. A. Lehmann offered him to print the two-volume book free of charge, he (allegedly) returned the money to Bari. The scientific community in Moscow took sides with Ilyin, and the Cheka had to free him.⁷⁶

The source of the funds, the Russian–American Vladimir Alexandrovich Bari (1887–1979),⁷⁷ was able to escape from prison and leave the country for the United States due to the intervention of the American consul in Moscow, most likely the US spy chief in revolutionary Russia, DeWitt Clinton Poole.⁷⁸ The connection to Bari may have been the key to Ilyin’s acquaintance with Igor Sikorsky (1889–1972), the world-famous Russian aviator who emigrated to the United States in 1919, with whom Ilyin later corresponded. Bari became vice president of the I. I. Sikorsky Corporation, which designed and manufactured various military aircrafts and subsequently supported one of Ilyin’s publication ventures, possibly with money from Sikorsky.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

⁷⁶ Lisitsa, “Kratkii biograficheskii ocherk.”

⁷⁷ Vladimir Bari was the son of the American merchant Alexander Veniaminovich Bari, owner of a large construction firm in Russia which was involved in large-scale industrial projects, such as railroads and pipelines. His company ‘Bari, Sytenko and Co’ was also engaged in oil production in Grozny and Baku—projects managed by the famous Ludvig Nobel. After his father’s death in 1913, Vladimir Bari inherited the firm. During the October Revolution, he sided against the Bolsheviks and headed an organization that helped officers cross over to the South to join the Volunteer Army. He was arrested by the Bolsheviks for the alleged financing of the Volunteer Army, but managed to escape from Moscow to the United States. See Anastasia Solovieva, “Miasnitskaia, 20,” HSE University, <https://www.hse.ru/fundament/myas20/>; A. B. Efimov, G. B. Efimov, and M. V. Efimova, “Ivan Aleksandrovich Il’in i sem’ia A.V. Bari: Vstrechi v nachale 20ogo veka,” *Gumanitarnoe prostranstvo* 9, No. 6 (2020): 785–97.

⁷⁸ “Rossiisko-amerikanskiye siuzhety,” *Khroniki tret’ego tysiacheletia* (Blog), July 16, 2011, <https://alliruk.livejournal.com/406561.html>; “Vrag vsego trudiashchegosia chelovechestva,” *Grazhdanskaia voina v Rossii* (Blog), July 3, 2013, <https://abc1918.livejournal.com/77376.html>.

⁷⁹ “Vladimir Alexandrovich Bari,” Geni, <https://www.geni.com/people/%D0%92%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%80-%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B8/600000034137795204>.

In August 1919, another arrest warrant was issued, followed by a search of Ilyin's apartment. He was accused of participating in counterrevolutionary activities alongside other members of the Cadet Party. The counterrevolutionaries were hoping for the arrival of White forces from the South, where General Konstantin K. Mamontov was still fighting against the Red Army. Lisitsa states, quoting Ivan Alexeyev, that "Ilyin and his brother Igor...were participating in these events, even carried out specific combat missions, such as damaging telegraph lines, etc."⁸⁰

Tactical Center

Subsequently, Ilyin was once again arrested in February 1920 for involvement in the counterrevolutionary activities of the Tactical Center (*Takticheskii tsentr*), but was released after two days, possibly due to Lenin's intervention, according to Lisitsa.⁸¹

The Tactical Center, established in Moscow in April 1919, was an alliance of underground anti-Bolshevik organizations that set out to coordinate the activities of the groups involved. It included the Union for the Revival of Russia (*Soiuz Vozrozhdeniia Rossii*), the (All-Russian) National Center (*Vserossiiskii natsional'nyi tsentr*), and the Council of Public Figures (*Sovet obshchestvennykh deiatelei*) and liaised with British intelligence.⁸² The Tactical Center was in communication with underground military organizations operating inside Bolshevik Russia as well as with the White forces of Admiral Alexander Kolchak and Anton Denikin. It foresaw a dictatorship as a transitional form of government and recognized Kolchak's authority.

Upon being arrested for the sixth time on September 6, 1922, Ilyin was once more interrogated and brought before the revolutionary tribunal. The latter sentenced Ilyin to a life in exile, and the verdict also called for a death sentence in case he ever returned to Russia.⁸³ On September 26, 1922, Ilyin boarded the *Oberbürgermeister Haken*, one of the Philosophers' Ships, which brought around 200 unwanted academics and intellectuals to Stettin, Germany.

Exile in Germany (1922–1938)

Ilyin had no difficulties settling into the new environment since he was already well-acquainted with the German language and culture. From

⁸⁰ Iurii Lisitsa, "Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin," Chronos, http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_i/ilin2ia.php.

⁸¹ Lisitsa, "Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin."

⁸² Lisitsa, "Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin"; V.N. Khaustov, "Takticheskii tsentr," *Bol'shaia rossiiskaia entsiklopediia*, https://web.archive.org/web/20221006013315/https://bigenc.ru/domestic_history/text/4180153.

⁸³ Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin."

October 1, 1922, until July 9, 1938, Ilyin lived in Berlin.⁸⁴ When he arrived in the capital, there was already an established Russian émigré community. As of 1917, 360,000 out of the 400,000 Russians in Germany resided in Berlin.⁸⁵ Until around 1924, Berlin remained the center of “Russia Abroad”; however, with the increasingly difficult economic situation in Germany and decreasing opportunities for foreigners, its rank was taken over by Paris. By 1930, a mere 90,000 Russians lived in Germany and only 45,000 in 1937. Ilyin was to stay among this crumbling community until his second exile in Switzerland in 1938.

Ilyin’s German years were extremely productive, and in that period, he ascended to a leading ideological role in the White movement and among Russian fascists. Leading up to his Swiss exile in 1938, he gave almost 200 lectures in Germany, Latvia, Switzerland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Austria.⁸⁶ In those years, he also authored about 400 articles, pamphlets, and books, which were published in several European countries and even overseas.

Russian Scientific Institute (1923–1934)

Initially things went well for Ilyin. German Russia experts took an avid interest in the passengers of the Philosophers’ Ships as people who had firsthand experience with the Soviet Union and, as evidenced by their expulsion, arrived with the badge of anti-Bolshevism. Otto Hoetzsch, president of the German Society for the Study of Eastern Europe (Deutsche Gesellschaft zum Studium Osteuropas, DGSO), one of the few research institutions in Germany dedicated to studying the Soviet Union, knew of the expellees’ plight.⁸⁷ The Society took immediate action to accommodate them in Berlin. It might be that Ilyin’s old professor, Novgorodtsev, who until 1924 lived in Berlin and had reportedly co-hosted a Pushkin event at the Berlin Philharmonic in late November 1921 alongside Hoetzsch, had alerted the latter to the expellees.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ V. Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya v tvorchestve I. A. Il’ina shveysarskogo perioda emigratsii,” *Zhurnal Regionologii*, No. 85 (2013): 277–85, 278, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/belaya-ideologiya-v-tvorchestve-i-a-ilina-shveysarskogo-perioda-emigratsii>.

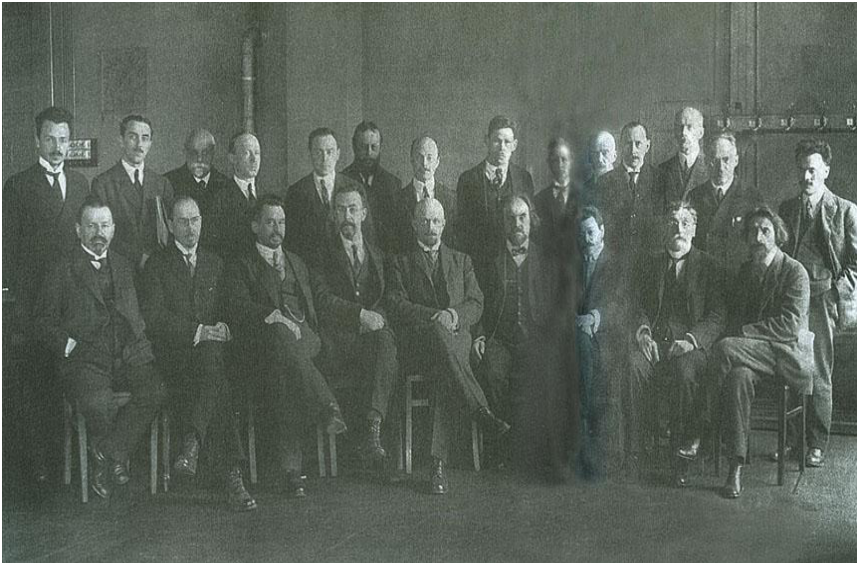
⁸⁵ Anastasia Solovyeva, “Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad, 1922–1938” (Master’s Thesis, Leiden University, 2020), 26. Solovyeva’s MA thesis, the only longer Ilyin biography available in English, largely regurgitates the revisionist takes of Ilyin’s apologists, and is referenced here only for a lack of better academic sources.

⁸⁶ Tsygankov, “Ivan Ilin.”

⁸⁷ Originally founded in 1913 as German Society for the Study of Russia (Deutsche Gesellschaft zum Studium Russlands) and run *de facto* by Hoetzsch, it went almost defunct during WWI, but was reestablished as DGSO in 1918. See Gerd Voigt, “Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin und die Gründung des Russischen Wissenschaftlichen Instituts,” in Karl Schlögel (ed.), *Russische Emigration in Deutschland 1918 bis 1941* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 270.

⁸⁸ Karl Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens in Deutschland 1918–1941* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1999), 84.

Hoetzsch organized a meeting with the stranded intellectuals on November 18, 1922, in which a committee was formed to develop a plan for their future, which on the Russian side included, besides Ilyin, the Moscow professors Nikolai Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, Vsevolod Ivanovich Yasinsky (1884–1933), and Alexander Ivanovich Ugrimov (1874–1957)—all passengers of the Philosophers' Ships.⁸⁹ Quickly, they agreed on the idea of forming an institute that would provide courses in Russian and German to Russian émigrés and the interested public to be taught by the expelled professors.



A picture available in the Ilyin archive shows the 1923 teaching staff of the RSI, which is annotated as follows: 1923. Berlin. Seated (from right to left): L. P. Karsavin, historian; S. N. Prokopovich, economist; Y. I. Aichenvald, literary critic; N. A. Berdyaev, publicist; V. I. Yasinsky, technologist; S. L. Frank, philosopher; V. Vikt. Stratonov, astronomer; M. M. Novikov, zoologist; A. I. Kalinka, civil lawyer; standing (from right to left): unknown; B. D. Brutskus, economist; I. A. Ilyin, philosopher of law; A. I. Ugrimov, economy of agriculture; Gogel, criminologist; M. A. Taube, international specialist; Markov economist; S. I. Gessen, pedagogist; I. A. Stratonov; historian of Russian law; unknown; Aikhenwald, physicist; Vysheslavitsev, publicist; Sesemann, philosopher. Source: "1923 god. 17 fevralia Torzhestvennyy akt v chest' otkrytiia Russkogo nauchnogo instituta," Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

Thus, under the auspices of the DGSO and with Hoetzsch's help, the Russian Scientific Institute (*Russkii Nauchnyi Institut v Berlīne*, RSI) opened its doors in February 1923, located in the facilities of the German Academy

⁸⁹ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 271–272.

of Politics (Deutsche Hochschule für Politik). Ilyin remained attached to the RSI throughout most of its lifespan, until July 1934, first as head of the department of law from 1923 to 1924 and from 1933 to 1934 as head of the institute.⁹⁰

It is known that from the RSI's outset, the German Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Office were involved in backroom talks regarding the institute's formation and operation; however, all contacts with the authorities went through the DGSO.⁹¹ In this way, they wanted to ensure the operation appeared apolitical on the surface. Overall, the German hosts had a profound interest in the fate of the Russian expellees. According to Hartmut Rüdiger Peter:

They wanted to harness the knowledge of the experts to evaluate economic, political and social processes in Russia and hoped to exert strategic influence in the post-Soviet era. Therefore, it seemed to the Foreign Office to be quite "desirable [...] to enable a limited number of Russians who had fled home to complete their studies," which could then be used "as a bridge to the promising economic territory."⁹²

Initially, the institute aspired to obtain university status for Russians in German exile. However, the courses taught there were not accredited in the German university system, in order to underline the independence of the institute from any German governmental influence. Adding to that, with the overall decline of the Russian émigré community, the interest in enrollment at the RSI sunk drastically. Thus, from 1926 onward, under pressure from the German Foreign Ministry, the RSI transformed into a research center.⁹³

Peter writes that, at its inception, "In the summer semester of 1923, 32 professors and lecturers taught at the institute; almost all of them were passengers of the 'philosophers' ships."⁹⁴ Among the professors, many were already well known in the Russian intelligentsia, and some were, or

⁹⁰ Hartmut Rüdiger Peter, "Ivan Il'in i fashizm," *Zhurnal'nyi klub Intelros "Al'ternativy,"* No. 4 (2012), <http://intelros.ru/readroom/alternativi/a4-2012/18240-ivan-ilin-i-fashizm.html>.

⁹¹ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 274.

⁹² Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil in Deutschland," 49.

⁹³ S. I. Mikhailchenko and E. V. Tkachenko, "Russkii nauchnyi institut v Berline v memuarakh i perepiske russkoi emigratsii," *Vestnik BGU*, 2017, No. 4 (34), <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/russkiy-nauchnyy-institut-v-berline-v-memuarakh-i-perepiske-russkoy-emigratsii>.

⁹⁴ Hartmut Rüdiger Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil in Deutschland: Das russische Wissenschaftliche Institut in Berlin und seine Auflösung nach der Machtergreifung der Nationalsozialisten," in *Mezhdunarodnyi dialog istorikov. Rossiia i Germaniia: Problemy mezhkul'turnogo vzaimodeistviia (1990–2020)* (Lipetsk, 2019), 48.

would become, key figures among White émigrés: Nikolai Berdyaev, an Orthodox and anti-Bolshevik theologian whose endeavors in emigration were funded by the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); Alexander A. Bogolepov (1885–1990), lawyer and former chief secretary in the First Department of the Holy Governing Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church; Alexander Aleksandrovich Kizevetter (1866–1933), historian and former publisher of *Russkaia mysl* and former leader of the Cadet Party; Baron Mikhail Aleksandrovich Taube (1869–1961), a former member of the State Council in Imperial Russia and later a legal advisor to Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich; and last but not least, Ilyin's friend Pyotr Struve.⁹⁵

For most of its existence (1923–1931), the RSI was headed by Vsevolod Yasinsky, a fiercely anti-Soviet engineer. According to Makarov and Khristoforov, "Yasinsky belonged, undoubtedly, to a number of citizens absolutely averse to Soviet power."⁹⁶ From 1931 to 1933, the RSI was headed by the writer Semyon Frank, a close affiliate of Nikolai Berdyaev and Struve since the early 1900s. In exile, Frank became a member of the YMCA-funded Russian Student Christian Movement and was equally adversarial to socialism in any form. His opinion was that socialism "cannot lead to anything other than the unbridled tyranny of despotic power and the dumbed-down passivity or bestial rebellion of its subjects."⁹⁷

While the German government supported the RSI largely in order to exploit the expertise of the stranded professors, the Whites at the institute used its framework for their own ends: to train stranded White youths, a project in which Ilyin took on a central role. The idea came from none other than the White leader Pyotr Wrangel (1878–1928), who at the time resided in the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. Wrangel personally contacted Ilyin in March 1923 regarding the venture to take on around 300 Whites as students at the RSI, "to prepare [them as] future workers [...] for rebuilding our Fatherland."⁹⁸ This marked the beginning of a friendship with Wrangel, a personal hero of Ilyin's, which lasted until Wrangel's death in 1928.

Ever since late January 1923, Ilyin was also in touch with Wrangel's representative in Germany and Hungary, General Alexei von Lampe (1885–1967), who had settled in Berlin in the spring of 1922 and begun to collaborate closely with Ilyin.⁹⁹ By April 1923, the White training venture

⁹⁵ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 161; Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 275.

⁹⁶ V. G. Makarov and V. S. Khristoforov, "K istorii vserossiiskogo komiteta pomoshchi golodaiushchim," *Novaya i Noveyshaya Istoriya*, No. 3 (2006), <http://vivovoco.astronet.ru/VV/JOURNAL/NEWHIST/POMGOL.HTM>.

⁹⁷ Semyon L. Frank, *Dukhovnye osnovy obshchestva* (Moscow: Respublika, 1992), 116.

⁹⁸ Ilyin, *Dnevnik, Pisma, Dokumenty*, 210–211.

⁹⁹ Laura Sophie Ritter, *Schreiben für die Weiße Sache: General Aleksei von Lampe als Chronist der russischen Emigration, 1920–1967* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2019), 263–264.

seems to have taken off, as indicated by a letter by Ilyin to Struve, with whom Ilyin was also in avid contact at that point:

The selected students have started arriving from the Balkans. Solidarity work hand in hand with the High Command [*Glavnym Komandovaniem*]. Funding is sufficient until September. The Council of Ambassadors [*Sovet poslov*] feared a German orientation from us at first, but then, having received evidence that we had one orientation only, a Russian-patriotic one, and that we did not take a penny from the Germans—did not ask for any, and are not going to take it—expressed their support and promised a little money.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, no further details could be established about the fate of the White students sent by Wrangel, for example, whether they attended courses with the other students or whether they received separate training. If indeed hundreds of students arrived at the RSI, initially they must have made up the bulk. It is also unclear whether the German hosts were fully privy to Wrangel's plans. All in all, the Russian side seemed more than wary about divulging any German support. For example, in the run-up to the RSI's foundation, Yasinsky stated that, "the endeavor was fully independent from the Society [DGSO] except the provision of the localities," and that, "There are already around 20 million Marks available, while more is expected from countries abroad with strong foreign currencies."¹⁰¹ Ilyin's comment that they would never take German money, be it a broken promise or a lie, indicates his desire to distance himself from any German influence.

Overall, the RSI received funding from multiple sources and served multiple interests and purposes. It has been established that money came from foreign donations, the League of Nations, the American Joint Distribution Committee, and the German Foreign Office.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ilyin, *Dnevnik, Pisma, Documenti*, 123.

¹⁰¹ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 273.

¹⁰² "A "financial committee" headed by the entrepreneur A. Buryshkin and the banker A. L. Forshteter took over the raising of funds and set up a donation account. Under the conditions of inflation, it was possible to raise the needed funds initially from foreign exchange donations from emigrated Russians and aid from the League of Nations. The "American Joint Distribution Committee" was also among the donors, which can be explained by the considerable number of Jewish students. ... The [German] Foreign Office contributed a total of about 630,000 Reichsmark (between 60,000 and 80,000 annually) until 1932 to help cover the growing gap in the Institute's funding." See Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil in Deutschland," 48, 51. This corresponds with Gerd Voigt's statement that the institute ultimately came to pass because of the "tremendous effort by Hoetzsch and his society, [and] last but not least with the financial help of the German government and the League of Nations, which for this purpose contributed 600 Swiss francs." See Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 275.

Young Men's Christian Association

It has also been stated that the RSI received funds from American intelligence, funneled through the infrastructure of the YMCA, from which Ilyin also received support until the mid-1920s.¹⁰³ Generally, the German side was wary of America's influence, fearing that it could entice away the Russian experts. A German employee at the Ministry of Culture, Wilhelm Westphal, mentioned that "it is recommended to have a closer look at the latter organization [YMCA]. It is not unlikely that there is a cesspool of anti-German and anti-Soviet agitation developing."¹⁰⁴

That the YMCA provided startup funds for the RSI was confirmed by the White émigré Anton Kartashev, former Minister of Confessions during the Kerensky Government as well as one of the organizers of the YMCA-funded Russian Student Christian Movement and the YMCA-Press in exile. However, he specified that the funds were funneled through the (Russian) Religious-Philosophical Academy (*Religiozno-Filosofskaiia Akademiia v Berlīne*, RPA) of Nikolai Berdyaev in Berlin—another educational initiative of White émigrés, which Ilyin helped found and where he gave numerous lectures in the years to come.¹⁰⁵

In parallel to his teaching position at the RSI, where he taught the history of Russian philosophical thought and served as a member of the Institute's scientific council, Berdyaev managed to rally enough support to start his own émigré enterprise, the Religious-Philosophical Academy.¹⁰⁶ Located within the YMCA's Berlin facilities at Reichstagsufer 6, the Academy opened its doors in November 1922. The RPA "was almost entirely supported by the Y[MCA], which provided 96 percent of the need; only 4 percent was covered by lecture entrance fees," according to Matthew Lee Miller, author of a book on the YMCA's Russian affairs.¹⁰⁷ The historian Karl Schlögel records 14 events involving Ilyin at the RPA from November 1922 through December 1925, notably lectures on the "Philosophy of Religion" and the "Philosophy of the Religious Experience."¹⁰⁸ Besides Ilyin and Berdyaev, the RPA also employed other fellow expellees and RSI employees, such as Semyon Frank, Boris P. Vysheslavitsev, Yuri Aichenvald, Fedor A. Stepun, Lev P. Karsavin, and others.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Schlögel, *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 136–137.

¹⁰⁴ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 273.

¹⁰⁵ "Russkii nauchnyi institut v Berlīne," Runivers, <https://runivers.ru/philosophy/lib/docs/6791/439108/>; Peter, "Ivan Il'in i fashizm."

¹⁰⁶ "1923 God. 19 Fevralia Pervoye Zasedanie Uchenogo Soveta Russkogo Nauchnogo Instituta v Berlīne," Runivers, July 26, 2012, <https://runivers.ru/philosophy/chronograph/154874/>.

¹⁰⁷ Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture - The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900–1940* (Lexington Books, 2013), 30.

¹⁰⁸ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 136–137, 143, 144, 146, 159, 161, 202, 203, 235, 251, 273, 274, 275, 278.

¹⁰⁹ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 136–137, 159, 235.

In 1924, Berdyaev moved to Paris, and in that same year reopened a branch of the Religious-Philosophical Academy there while Ilyin continued to lecture at the RPA's Berlin branch, which seems to have closed shortly thereafter.¹¹⁰ Besides the RPA, Berdyaev served as the editor of the still-printing Russian-language YMCA-Press from 1923 until the end of his life. YMCA-Press was another YMCA-sponsored project enlisting Orthodox, monarchist, and right-wing authors from the Russian émigré intelligentsia in the early anti-communist cultural war, many of whom ended up in the Russian literary canon.¹¹¹ YMCA-Press produced a barrage of anti-Soviet tracts, targeting Russian émigrés as well as people living in the Soviet Union; the latter came in the form of *tamizdat*—literature published abroad and smuggled into the USSR. Ilyin published one text with YMCA-Press in the mid-1920s, *The Religious Meaning of Philosophy: Three Speeches, 1914–1923*.¹¹² Following Ilyin's scandalous publication of *On Resistance to Evil by Force* in 1925, Berdyaev became his staunch enemy. Thus it comes as no surprise that no more publications were to follow.¹¹³ However, Ilyin utilized his YMCA-Press contacts in the postwar period.

With the RSI and the RPA as catch basins for anti-Bolshevik Whites rather than academic institutions, it comes as no surprise that, after his arrival in Germany, Ilyin failed to establish himself in the academic community. Only one of Ilyin's texts from his time at the RSI is recorded: "The Problem of Modern Legal Consciousness," the speech he delivered at the opening of the Institute on February 17, 1923, which was published as a 32-page brochure in Berlin by the Society "Press" (Gesellschaft "Presse"), according to Lisitsa. There is a distinct possibility that the same publishing house was responsible for Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* two years later.¹¹⁴

In total, only two academic publications appeared after his arrival in Germany, both of which were also political in nature: an article for a German journal of philosophy of law in 1925–1926 entitled "Bolshevism

¹¹⁰ W. H. G. Armytage, *The Russian Influence on English Education* (London: Routledge, 2018), 75.

¹¹¹ Christopher Stroop, "'A Christian Solution to International Tension': Nikolai Berdyaev, the American YMCA, and Russian Orthodox Influence on Western Christian Anti-Communism, c.1905–60," *Journal of Global History* 13, No. 2 (2018), 192.

¹¹² Ivan Ilyin, *Religiozno smysl filosofii: tri rechi, 1914–1923* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1924 or 1925).

¹¹³ Nikita A. Struve, *Bratstvo Sv. Sofii. Materialy i Dokumenty 1923–1939* (Moscow & Paris: Russkiy Put, 2000), 6, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210517165723/http://ivashek.com/ru/texts/theology-texts/570-bratsvo-sv-sofii-materialy-i-dokumenty-1923-1939>; Chrissy Stroop, "A Right-Wing International?," Political Research Associates, February 16, 2016, <https://politicalresearch.org/2016/02/16/russian-social-conservatism-the-u-s-based-wcf-the-global-culture-wars-in-historical-context>.

¹¹⁴ Ivan Ilyin, "Problema sovremennogo pravosoznaniia" (Berlin: Gesellschaft "Presse", 1923), in Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Stat'i. Lektsii. Vystupleniia. Retsenzii (1906–1954)* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 2001), 445 ff., 540–541.

and the Crisis of Modern Legal Consciousness”¹¹⁵ and the chapter “Legal Order and Legal Consciousness in Modern Russia,” published in the compendium *Foreign Studies Russia*.¹¹⁶ The latter was based on a lecture that Ilyin delivered to the Working Committee for the Promotion of Studying Abroad, organized by the Institute for the East German Economy (Institute für Ostdeutsche Wirtschaft) at the Albert Magnus University in Königsberg.

In Ilyin’s curriculum vitae from 1937, it mentions that in 1924, he “was elected Corresponding Member of the School of Slavonic Studies at the Royal University of London,” a role which, judging from the lack of references, did not lead to any noteworthy academic opportunities.¹¹⁷ That year, he apparently also wrote a letter to Edmund Husserl “to refresh the old connection,” in which he begged Husserl to publish his PhD thesis in Germany—to no avail.¹¹⁸

Thus, by the mid-1920s, Ilyin had practically abandoned his academic aspirations and gave over entirely to political propaganda and activism within the White movement.

Nikolaevichi vs. Kirillovichi

The foundation of the RSI and the RPA fell into the tumultuous period of the fledgling Weimar Republic, in whose political turmoil the Whites played a considerable role. Although Germany and Russia had been adversaries during WWI, in the course of the Russian Civil War (1917–1923), some Whites collaborated with the German military against their common enemy—Bolshevik Russia and the Red Army. Consequently, a considerable number of White soldiers ended up in Germany, where they conspired with German enemies of the Weimar Republic, which was not only democratic but sought to make peace with the burgeoning Soviet Union—an abomination in the eyes of both the Whites and the German aristocracy.

In 1920, a group of Whites was involved in the Kapp Putsch, which failed in Berlin, but brought a right-wing government into power in Bavaria—the cradle of the Nazi movement.¹¹⁹ Ilyin had arrived a few months after the

¹¹⁵ Ivan Ilyin, “Bolschewismus und der Krise des modernen Rechtsbewußtseins,” *Archiv für Rechts- und Wirtschaftsphilosophie*, Berlin-Grunewald, 1925–1926, Vol. XIX, 26–44.

¹¹⁶ Ivan Ilyin, “Rechtsordnung und Rechtsbewußtsein im gegenwärtigen Rußland,” in *Schriftenreihe “Auslandsstudien,” Vol 2: Rußland*, Arbeitsausschuß zur Förderung des Auslandsstudium an der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg i. Pr. (ed.) (Königsberg i. Pr.: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1926), 75–108.

¹¹⁷ Swiss Federal Archives, “Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers),” Dokument 4 (Ivan Ilyin’s Curriculum Vitae from 1937), 25.

¹¹⁸ “Pis'mo Il'ina I. A. [Gusserliu Edmundu],” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-ilina-i-a-gusserlyu-edmundu.

¹¹⁹ Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism. White Émigrés and the making of National Socialism 1917–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

signing of the Treaty of Rapallo in April 1922, in which Germany had *de jure* recognized the Soviet Union. This strengthened Ilyin's existing belief that Weimar Germany was not to be counted on in the fight against the Bolsheviks. The RSI and the RPA emerged a year ahead of the failed Beer Hall Putsch of November 8–9, 1923, in which, once again, a group of Whites played a seminal role—leaving one wondering whether Ilyin's efforts of training the Whites at the RSI had anything to do with the coup attempt.¹²⁰

Two monarchist factions existed among the Whites in the interwar period: one that supported the bid for Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich (1856–1929), who predominantly sought support from the Entente powers for his anti-Bolshevik plotting, as future Tsar (*Nikolaevichi*). The other faction wanted to see Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich (1876–1938) on the throne, who had settled in Germany in the early 1920s and allied with German monarchists and the early Nazi movement in order to first topple the Weimar Republic and then the Soviet Union (*Kirillovichi*). However, among both camps were early supporters of fascism and Nazism.

Ilyin initially leaned towards the senior Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, a battle-hardened general married to Princess Anastasia of Montenegro, whose sister Elena of Montenegro was the wife of the King of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III, who had put Mussolini in power. At the outset of WWI, Nicholas Nikolaevich was briefly commander-in-chief of the Russian Imperial Army, and later commander-in-chief in the Caucasus region. He escaped just ahead of the Red Army in April 1919 aboard the British Royal Navy battleship HMS Marlborough. After a stay in Genoa as a guest of Victor Emmanuel, Nicholas and his wife took up residence in a chateau at Choigny, near Paris, where they were granted protection by the French secret police.

From there, he directed his extensive White networks to terrorize, sabotage, and subvert the Soviet Union, whereby he deeply relied on the services of the White generals Alexander Kutepov (1882–1930) and Pyotr Wrangel. To fund their anti-Bolshevik endeavors, at the end of 1923, another fellow White general, Pyotr Krasnov (1869–1947), created a special fund for the Grand Duke, the “Treasury of the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich” (later renamed “Fund for the Salvation of the Homeland”).¹²¹ According to the historian Petr Bazanov:

The “Treasury of H. R. H. Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich” (there were 73 branches in Bulgaria alone) collected money for political and publishing activities.... The treasury issued numerous appeals to the

¹²⁰ Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism*, 209 ff.

¹²¹ Alexandre Jevakhoff, *Les Russes Blancs* (Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2011), 387; Paul Robinson, *The White Russian Army in Exile, 1920–1941* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 135. Krasnov had switched allegiance to the Germans during the Russian Civil War and ultimately ended up as a Nazi-collaborator, as head of the Main Directorate of Cossack Troops of the Imperial Ministry of the Eastern Occupied Territories.

emigration...to donate as much as they can to the cause of the liberation of Russia.¹²²

The Grand Duke's competitor for the "throne in exile," Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, was married to Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1876–1936). Both had left Russia in 1917, and from 1921 onward spent extensive periods of time in Coburg, Germany, where Victoria's family had an estate—a safe haven for German Freikorps and one of the most important political bases of the early Nazi movement. Coburg was formerly a Duchy, whose last reigning Duke was Victoria's cousin, Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1884–1954), a protégé of the last German emperor, Wilhelm II. Charles Edward provided financial and logistic support to the Freikorps *Marinebrigade Ehrhardt*, involved in the Kapp Putsch of 1920, as well as to the secret terrorist group Organization Consul, responsible for numerous political assassinations in the early 1920s.¹²³

Kirill and Victoria maintained close relations with German monarchist circles, particularly with Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and General Erich Ludendorff. They were openly supportive of the Nazi party, which appealed to them because of its anti-Bolshevism and the prospect that the Nazis might help restore the Russian monarchy.¹²⁴ In 1922, the leader of the NSDAP and future *Führer* of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, came to Coburg to participate in the "German Day" celebrations hosted by Grand Duchess Victoria. The Duchess, in turn, attended several gatherings of the *Sturmabteilung*, the paramilitary arm of the Nazi party.¹²⁵

Victoria was the couple's driving force, pushing her husband to claim the throne in exile, which he ultimately did in August 1924, much to the chagrin of his contender Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich. She also provided funds for the creation of the White pro-Nazi youth organization Mladorossy, which emerged following a congress in Munich in February 1923 and aimed to attract young people to the ranks of the Russian Legitimist movement, supporting her husband's bid for "Tsar in Exile."

An important interface for Kirill and Victoria's collaboration with the burgeoning Nazi movement was the obscure Aufbau Vereinigung (Reconstruction Union), which received financial support from the couple. Aufbau was a conspiratorial organization of White Russian and German aristocrats, military men, and industrialists intended to topple the Weimar Republic. It formed in October 1920, six months after the failed Kapp Putsch. Aufbau collaborated with Adolf Hitler throughout its short

¹²² Petr N. Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoi Pravdy – samaia zagadochnaia organizatsiia Russkogo Zarubezh'ia* (Moscow: Posev, 2013), 42.

¹²³ Karina Urbach, *Go-Betweens for Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 150 ff.

¹²⁴ Michael Sullivan, *Fatal Passion: The Story of the Uncrowned Last Empress of Russia* (New York: Random House, 1997), 353–354.

¹²⁵ V. I. Goldin, *Oldaty na chuzhbine Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz, Rossiia i russkoe zarubezh'e V XX-XXI Vekakh* (Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz, 2011), 46, http://militera.lib.ru/research/goldin_vi01/index.html.

existence (1920–1923) and included the infamous WWI General Erich Ludendorff, who, after the war, became a prominent nationalist leader, just as the White-turned-Nazi leader Alfred Rosenberg.

According to Michael Kellogg, “Along with other considerable funds that the couple had placed at Aufbau’s disposal,” Kirill and Victoria had lent 500,000 gold marks to General Erich von Ludendorff.¹²⁶ Kellogg also suggested that the Nazi Party and Aufbau were financed with money from American industrialist Henry Ford, which was transferred through Kirill Vladimirovich’s representative in America and a member of Aufbau, Boris Brazol, and that “Brazol likely continued to act as a conduit between Ford and Kirill in the 1930s who transferred money from the former to the latter.”¹²⁷ However, after the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch failed, in which several prominent Kirillovichi were involved, and the Nazi Party was temporarily banned, Kirill and Victoria moved their major residence to France, which in the meantime had superseded Germany as the center of Russian emigration.

Although Ilyin was one of Wrangel’s top men in Berlin who had sworn allegiance to Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, his motivations were rather strategic: betting on the more powerful horse at a given point in time, all the while wooing German nationalists’ circles. After all, both monarchist factions had the common goal of toppling the Soviet Union, superordinate to any legitimist squabbles. Although the Nikolaevichi were initially more influential, Wrangel’s death in 1928, followed by Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich’s in 1929, ultimately gave the advantage to Kirill’s camp, and Ilyin eventually lent his support to the latter.

Ilyin’s close conduct with Wrangel and his deputy Alexei von Lampe from 1923 onwards indicates that he was fully initiated in their anti-Bolshevik schemes from an early stage. After all, they had put him in the powerful position of training Whites at the RSI. Although Wrangel had been thoroughly defeated in the course of the Russian Civil War, even while his troops were evacuated from Crimea to Istanbul in November 1920, the idea of another intervention against the Bolsheviks emerged: the so-called “Spring Intervention” (*Vesennyi pokhod*), which became an *idée fixe* of the White Movement. Hoping for support from the Entente powers, it was planned that on May 1, 1921, the White Army would disembark at the Black Sea and start a new offensive against the Bolsheviks. This Spring Intervention was never realized. Nonetheless, the plan was maintained, with the date continuously postponed to further and further into the future, and ultimately became a purely symbolic and ideological rallying point for the White movement personified by Wrangel.¹²⁸

ROVS

In 1922, Wrangel settled in the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs (Kingdom of SCS), and there, in September 1924, founded the Russian All-

¹²⁶ Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism*, 248.

¹²⁷ Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism*, 249.

¹²⁸ Solovyeva, “Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad,” 36.

Military Union (*Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz*, ROVS), with whose activities Ilyin became intimately involved.¹²⁹ The purpose of the ROVS was to keep the White Army alive by uniting all White troops who had fled abroad to foment a guerrilla war in the USSR. It served as an umbrella organization for various smaller military unions and coordinated secret sabotage and reconnaissance missions against the Soviet Union.¹³⁰ The ROVS became the largest and best-known White émigré organization with an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 members.¹³¹

In 1924/1925, with the blessings of Wrangel, a youth branch of the ROVS, the National Youth Union (*Natsional'nyi Soiuz Molodezhi*, NSM), was established by the White infantry general Alexander Kutepov, alongside Prince Anton Turkul and other White officers. According to a CIA memo "Kutepov...at this time was attached to the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich and...led the underground battle against the Soviets."¹³² The British intelligence specialist Stephen Dorril stated that the NSM "enjoyed the support of several European intelligence services, in particular MI6."¹³³ MI6's *de facto* control of the NSM was facilitated via the Inner Line (*Vnutrennaia Liniia*), the secret counter-intelligence unit of the ROVS and the NSM, headed by Kutepov and Claudius Voss, MI6 agent and head of the ROVS Balkan section at the time.¹³⁴ Kutepov also ran his own combat group, the Combat organization of General Kutepov (*Boevnaia Organizatsiia Generala Kutepova*), a secret organization within the ROVS created in 1922 for reconnaissance and sabotage activities on Soviet territory.

Although Ilyin was never identified as a member of the ROVS, he became a prominent ideologue of the organization and remained affiliated with the ROVS throughout his life. At a later point, he would come to work with one of the NSM's successor organizations, the earliest precursor of the infamous Russian émigré group National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS).

As early as 1924, the ROVS-affiliated Obshchestvo Gallipoliitsev (Society of Gallipoli, which Wrangel and Kutepov had founded in November 1921) in

¹²⁹ "Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz Papers," Finding Aid, 3, Collection of Correspondence and Manuscript Documents, Columbia University, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/inside/projects/findingaids/scans/pdfs/ldpd_bak_4078323.pdf.

¹³⁰ Columbia University, "Russkii Obshche-Voinskii Soiuz (ROVS) Papers," 3; "Russian Emigrant Organizations," CIA Report, Central Intelligence Agency, March 29, 1950, 4, <https://archive.org/details/CIA-RDP82-00457R004400040003-3>.

¹³¹ Solovyeva, "Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad," 38.

¹³² Central Intelligence Agency, "Russian Emigrant Organizations," 7.

¹³³ Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 406.

¹³⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "Russian Emigrant Organizations," 7. A nucleus of the Inner Line had existed since 1924, the year Kutepov became head of the Intelligence Department of the ROVS, however, it was not until 1927 that it became fully operational. See Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Osnovnoe nraustvennoe protivorechie voyny. O soprotivlenii zlu siloiu* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1996), 585.

Belgrade published texts by Ilyin. He also contributed an article to the Society's journal *Vestnik Gallipoliitsev*, entitled "Our Political Image," followed by the brochure "The Homeland and Us" in 1926 and an article in the *Gallipoliets* titled "We Need to Get Ready" a year later.¹³⁵

Presumably through his ROVS-connections, Ilyin's articles also appeared in another Belgrade-based publication, *Novoe vremia*, to which he contributed numerous articles between 1925 and 1928, mostly polemics defending the White cause against its political enemies.

Pyotr Struve

Most of the articles that Ilyin wrote in the interwar period appeared in White publications that had sprung up in the centers of Russian emigration across Europe, particularly in France. A considerable number of them were published by Ilyin's old colleague, Pyotr Struve, with whom Ilyin closely collaborated in those years and with whom he corresponded frequently, at least until 1940.¹³⁶ Just like Ilyin, Struve had been deeply enmeshed in anti-Bolshevik plotting during the revolutionary years, which makes one wonder whether the two had previously worked together.

Struve had joined the anti-Bolshevik Right Center (*Pravyi tseñtr*), a British-supported underground organization which emerged in November 1917 in Moscow that brought together right-wing interest groups from monarchist, military, and business circles. Struve sat on the "special council" of the Volunteer Army, which notably included the former SR terrorist Boris Savinkov. Although only short-lived, the Right Center had raised funds for the Volunteer Army. Some of its former members, including Struve, joined the quasi-successor organization National Center, which is said to have "received 500,000 rubles a month from British intelligence alone."¹³⁷ The National Center would eventually join the Tactical Center's efforts, in which Ilyin was suspected to have partaken.

During the Russian Civil War, Struve joined the Volunteer Army's Council and, in 1919, he served as a representative of the White government of General Anton Denikin.¹³⁸ When in early 1920 General Pyotr Wrangel took

¹³⁵ "Stat'ya 'O nashem politicheskom like' ('Vestnik Gallipoliitsev') [1924]," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-statya-o-nashem-politicheskom-like-vestnik-gallipoliycev; Ivan Ilyin, *Rodina i my* (Belgrade: Izd. Obshchestva Gallipoliitsev, 1926); Ivan Ilyin, "Nam nado gotovit'sia," *Gallipoliets*, Belgrade, Issue 1, November 9, 1927, 1.

¹³⁶ Ilyin, *Dneonik, Pisma, Dokumenty*, 115 ff.; "Register of the Petr Berngardovich Struve Papers, 1890–1982," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, <http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf087000gp>.

¹³⁷ L. Guryev, "Likvidatsiia Zagovora Natsional'nogo Tsentra," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, Issue 3 (1939), <https://web.archive.org/web/20220108124024/http://communist-ml.ru/archives/6688>.

¹³⁸ W. Bruce Lincoln, *Red Victory: A History of the Russian Civil War, 1918–1921* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 426.

over as leader, Struve became Director of Foreign Affairs in Wrangel's government.¹³⁹ After the Whites' defeat in November 1920, Struve eventually ended up in Paris where he stayed the rest of his life. A staunch supporter of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich's bid for "Tsar in Exile," Struve continued his anti-Bolshevik intrigues and joined various White émigré organizations in the interwar period. He was majorly involved in the refoundation of the National Center in Paris 1921 as the Russian National Committee (*Russkii Natsional'nyi Komitet*), committed to the armed struggle against Soviet Russia.¹⁴⁰ Struve was also a member of the Brotherhood of St. Sophia, a quasi-chivalric Christian Orthodox organization which comprised some of the who's who in White exile, including Ilyin's former professor Novgorodtsev, Nikolai Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, and Sergey Bulgakov.¹⁴¹

Struve became a well-known figure of the exiled White intelligentsia as the editor of two of their most important mouthpieces: the journal *Russkaia mysl* and the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie* (*Renaissance*), to both of which Ilyin contributed in the interwar period. *Russkaia mysl* had been reestablished by Struve in 1921 in Sofia and was then published in Prague (1922–1923), Berlin (1923–1926), and finally Paris (1927–1940). Between 1922 and 1927, Ilyin published several articles in *Russkaia mysl*, notably obituaries of his professors Prince Evgeny Trubetskoy, deceased in 1920, and Novgorodtsev, who died four years later, as well as other White apologia, such as "The National Significance of the White Army" in 1923/1924.¹⁴²

In 1925 and 1926, Ilyin contributed about fifty articles to the Parisian newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*, while Struve was the editor (1925–1927). The Russian-language *Vozrozhdenie* existed from 1925 to 1940 and served as a mouthpiece for various currents of the White emigration.¹⁴³ Ilyin wrote notably a series of nine "Letters About Fascism," which were published between 1925 and 1926 under the pseudonym "Iver."¹⁴⁴ The first one, titled

¹³⁹ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right*, 464.

¹⁴⁰ Aleksandr Prokhorov (ed.), *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Volume 30 (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 209.

¹⁴¹ Vladimir Burega, "'Prazhskii period' zhizni protoiereia Sergiia Bulgakova (1923–1925)," *Pravoslavie*, May 26, 2004, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/5240.html>.

¹⁴² Ivan Ilyin, "Dukhovnaia kul'tura i ee natsional'nye vozhdii. Pamiati kniazia Evgeniia Nikolaevicha Trubetskogo," *Russkaia mysl'*, Issue 1, Prague, Paris, 1923, 262–274; Ivan Ilyin, "Pamiati I. Novgorodtseva," *Russkaia mysl'*, Issues 9–12, 1923–1924, 369–374; Ivan Ilyin, "Gosudarstvennyi smysl Beloi Armii," *Russkaia mysl'*, Issues 9–12, 1923–1924, 230–245.

¹⁴³ From 1925 to 1935 *Vozrozhdenie* was published daily, from 1936 to 1940 weekly. Most issues published between 1925 and 1939 are available online at the Princeton University Library,

<https://historicperiodicals.princeton.edu/historic/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=vozrozhdenie>.

¹⁴⁴ Published in *Vozrozhdenie* No. 130, October 10, 1925; No. 194, December 13, 1925; No. 201, December 20, 1925; No. 222, January 10, 1926; No. 229, January 17, 1926; No. 276, March 5, 1926; No. 279, March 8, 1926; No. 287, March 16, 1926; No. 375, July 12, 1926.

"Letters from Italy. Pages of Struggle," was subtitled "from our correspondent," presuming that Ilyin was *inter alia* working for *Vozrozhdenie* while visiting Italy in 1925/1926.

Besides France and the Kingdom of SCS, Ilyin could also count on publishing contacts in Latvia—another known hub of White activity. Ilyin contributed around ten articles to the Latvia-based journal *Slovo* between 1925 and 1928, and a few articles to *Perezhvony* in 1926 and 1927, both located in Riga.

Flirting with the Eurasianists

While Ilyin's contacts to Whites certainly prevailed after his arrival in Berlin, he was initially considering the possibility of joining forces with émigré circles that had considerably different ideological leanings, as his brief liaison with the Eurasianists shows. From 1922 to early 1925, Ilyin was in touch with representatives of the Eurasian movement, among whose founders and main leaders were Nikolai S. Trubetskoy (1890–1938), Pyotr N. Savitsky (1895–1968), and Pyotr Suvchinsky (1892–1985)—a rather motley crew of exiled Russian intellectuals who in the 1920s tried to kickstart a new school of thinking in the émigré community. Eurasianists believed that Russia was a civilization on its own and did not belong to Europe. In many respects, they accepted the Bolshevik revolution as a necessary step to swiftly modernize Russia. And thus, some of its proponents opposed the Whites' anti-Bolshevik activities, including organizations such as the ROVS. Nonetheless, the Eurasianists' strong adherence to Russian Orthodoxy put them at odds with the Bolsheviks' militant atheism.

Trubetskoy, a longtime professor of Slavic Philology at the University of Vienna (1922–1938) and considered the most pre-eminent Eurasianist figure, was in touch with Suvchinsky in Berlin, who kept him abreast of the development of the ambivalent relationship with Ilyin. Suvchinsky "later became their [the Eurasianists'] political representative in relations with the GPU and the leadership of the Bolsheviks," according to Modest Kolerov.¹⁴⁵ It seemed that initially both Ilyin and his Eurasianist contacts were keen to gain exposure through each others' platforms and thought they could set aside some of their fundamental disagreements, not least of which was the Eurasianists' rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the liaison between Ilyin and Eurasianist circles was cut short after one of Ilyin's texts was rejected by one of their publications in early 1925—a chapter that made its way into *Resistance to Evil by Force* later that year—which apparently irrevocably hurt Ilyin's pride.¹⁴⁶

On Resistance to Evil by Force (1925)

¹⁴⁵ Modest Kolerov, "Kak i zachem Ivan Il'in iskal soiuza s evraziitsami v 1923-1925 godakh," Regnum, May 18, 2020, <https://regnum.ru/article/2952518.html>.

¹⁴⁶ Kolerov, "Kak i zachem Ivan Il'in iskal soiuza."

It was in the mid-1920s that Ilyin notably started to sympathize with fascism, in which he saw a distinct parallel to the White movement. According to Tsygankov:

When Ilyin was in Italy in 1925–26 and wrote the book *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, he observed the fascist movement there. He hailed it as humanity's response to the call of internationalism, to impiety, dishonor, and greed, and as a natural reaction to the lack of will to power and to state disorder. In Russia, Ilyin noted, this phenomenon had emerged as the White Movement.¹⁴⁷

On Resistance to Evil by Force, originally written in Russian, expands on Ilyin's Christofascist axiom that it is one's religious duty to fight against the Bolsheviks. The book caused a major controversy and divided the Russian emigrants. However, it catapulted Ilyin into the limelight, and he subsequently became a rallying point for Whites who sympathized with fascism.

In June 1925, Ilyin promoted the release of the book in an article for *Vozrozhdenie*, which outlined the book's main ideas, giving rise to the controversy.¹⁴⁸ According to Tsygankov:

The minority supported Ilyin's defense of the White movement and uncompromising struggle against the Bolsheviks: e.g., Peter Struve, Ivan Bunin, Ivan Shmelev, and the Executive Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky). However, it had more opponents: Berdyaev, Zinaida Gippius, many left-wing and liberal intellectuals who criticized the use of the Bible for justifying war and fighting.¹⁴⁹

Struve had nothing but praise for Ilyin's rhetorical skills: "...Russian academic rhetoric lost its luster to awaken to new life in the incomparable talent of I. A. Ilyin."¹⁵⁰ *On Resistance to Evil by Force* was first published in June 1925 in a private Berlin publishing house, Society "Press" (Gesellschaft "Presse"), which might have published Ilyin's 1923 RSI brochure.¹⁵¹ The book was financed by Baron Boris Gustavovich von Koeppen, a member of the Supreme Monarchical Union (*Vysshiĭ Monarkhicheskii Soiuz*), with whom Ilyin stayed in touch into the Nazi era.

¹⁴⁷ Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin."

¹⁴⁸ Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Osnovnoe nraostvennoe protivorechie voiny. O soprotivlenii zlu siloiu* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1996), 483.

¹⁴⁹ Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin."

¹⁵⁰ Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin," quoting Piotr Struve, "Muzhestvennaia rech' russkogo myslitelia," *Vozrozhdenie*, No. 572, Paris, December 26, 1926, 1.

¹⁵¹ Ivan Ilyin, *O soprotivlenii zlu siloiu* (Berlin: Gesellschaft "Presse," 1925).

It was distributed by the bookstore and publishing house Grad Kitezh in Berlin, which existed between 1920 and 1942 and was controlled by Duke George Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg (1872–1929).¹⁵² This is evidenced by a contract between Ilyin and Grad Kitezh to take over the book's distribution.¹⁵³ In all likelihood, it was Ilyin's connection to the bookstore that kicked off his collaboration with the Duke.

Leuchtenberg, who was "a descendant of Nicholas I, Napoleon I's stepson Eugene Beauharnais, and closely related to the Bavarian royal dynasty of the Wittelsbachs," had been deeply entrenched in anti-Bolshevik plotting since the days of the October Revolution.¹⁵⁴ Leuchtenberg, who was also related to Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and supported his cause, had cofounded the monarchist union Our Homeland (*Nasha Rodina*), which in 1918 coordinated the formation of the short-lived White-German Southern Army in Kiev.¹⁵⁵ Leuchtenberg was a leading figure of the Brotherhood of Russian Truth (*Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*) in the early 1920s and funded its publishing house Bronze Horseman (*Mednyi vsadnik*).

According to Bazanov, a chronicler of the Brotherhood of Russian Truth, "The bookstore [Grad Kitezh] was the main representative of the monarchical publishing houses Detinets, Mednyi Vsadnik, Kremlin, Styag, Dvuhlavy Orel, Aufbau, and many others."¹⁵⁶ It should be noted that Aufbau was associated with the aforementioned Aufbau Vereinigung, which was among the first organizations involving White Russians to conspire with the burgeoning Nazi movement.

Besides his publishing activities, Ilyin kept afloat with lecture tours in Germany and abroad. It should be noted that shortly upon his arrival, Ilyin started giving lectures at numerous folkish and nationalist associations and clubs, some of them affiliated with the early Nazi movement. On April 16, 1923, he spoke at the National Club (*Nationaler Klub*) in Berlin, where Adolf Hitler had given a speech a year earlier.¹⁵⁷ On March 16, 1926, he was invited to an invitation-only event of the German National People's Party

¹⁵² "Grad Kitezh was a joint-stock company headed by the director - the commander-in-chief of the Don Army, Lieutenant General of the General Staff, Svyatoslav Varlamovich Denisov (1898–1957). In 1923, he left for America and there became the chairman of the Cossack Union in the USA. The second director of Grad Kitezh was General Vladimir Vasilyevich Domozhirov." N. Bazanov, "Izdatel'stva Gertsoga G. N. Leikhtenbergskogo 'Grad Kitezh' i 'Detinets,'" *Vestnik* 20, No. 3 (September 2014): 72–78, 72.

¹⁵³ Bazanov, "Izdatel'stva Gertsoga G. N. Leikhtenbergskogo," 73.

¹⁵⁴ Bazanov, "Izdatel'stva Gertsoga G. N. Leikhtenbergskogo," 72.

¹⁵⁵ Bazanov, "Izdatel'stva Gertsoga G. N. Leikhtenbergskogo," 72.

¹⁵⁶ Bazanov, "Izdatel'stva Gertsoga G. N. Leikhtenbergskogo," 72.

¹⁵⁷ "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma ot raznykh inostrannykh uchrezhdenii i organizatsiy Il'inu I. A.," 3, Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in,

https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/oficialnye-pisma-ot-raznykh-inostrannykh-uchrezhdeniy-i-organizatsiy-ilinu-i-a; Adolf Hitler and Ewald von Massow, "Commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Führers first appearance in the club" (Nationaler Klub, 1937), <https://lcn.loc.gov/2005575163>.

(*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*), a nationalist, folkish, and antisemitic party that eventually merged with the Nazi Party.¹⁵⁸

At the beginning of the draft speech, Ilyin pointed out that he was “born with a national and patriotic mindset,” and that he fully agreed with the “open, truthful, and truly German words” of the previous speaker (although Ilyin had not yet heard what the latter had to say). He noted that the friends of a national Russia abroad do not come from the war’s winners but from its losers (i.e., Germany), and that they should awaken to the “world danger” of the communist revolution.¹⁵⁹ It should be noted that the Nazi Party had made a comeback at that point. Although banned after the Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923, it continued to operate under the name “German Party” (*Deutsche Partei*).¹⁶⁰ Barely two months after Adolf Hitler was released from prison in December 1924, he pressed the Bavarian authorities to lift the ban on the Nazi party, which led to the refoundation of the NSDAP on February 26, 1925, with Hitler at the helm.

On March 26, 1926, Ilyin gave a speech at the Prussian Mansion (*Preussisches Herrenhaus*) about the “New National Russia.”¹⁶¹ In late 1927, he spoke at the United Fatherland Associations (*Vereinte Vaterländische Verbände*) in Munich. The lecture had apparently “created a sensation” so that the management forwarded Ilyin’s address to the Bavarian Industrial Association (*Bayerischer Industriellenverband*).¹⁶² This may have given way to Ilyin’s numerous contacts with those in German industrialist circles, which became particularly frequent during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

In 1925, Ilyin also began to appear in the orbit of nationalist émigré organizations, notably the Russian National Student Association (*Russkii Natsional’nyi Studentechskii Soiuz*, RNSS). In November of that year, he gave a speech at an invitation-only event organized by the RNSS, alongside Alexei von Lampe, celebrating the eighth year of the founding of the Volunteer Army and its leader, the “black baron,” Pyotr Wrangel.¹⁶³

Russian Foreign Congress (1926)

Ilyin’s important ideological role within the ROVS became evident during the Russian Foreign Congress (*Rossiiskii Zarubezhnyi S’ezd*), which took place from April 4–11, 1926, at the Hotel Majestic in Paris, bringing together

¹⁵⁸ Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Ofitsial’nyye Pis’m’a,” 5.

¹⁵⁹ “I.A. Il’in. Rech’ Na Mitinge ‘Deutsch-Nationale-Volkspartei Wilmwiesdorf-Berlin’ (‘Germanskoy Natsional’noy Partii Vil’mersdorf-Berlin’),” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-rech-na-mitinge-deutsch-nationale-volkspartei-wilmwiesdorf-berlin-germanskoy-natsionalnoy-partii-vilmersdorf-berlin.

¹⁶⁰ David Jablonsky, *The Nazi Party in Dissolution: Hitler and the Verbotzeit, 1923–1925* (London & New York: Routledge, 2013). (electronic version)

¹⁶¹ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 288.

¹⁶² Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Ofitsial’nyye pis’m’a,” 14.

¹⁶³ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 274.

over 400 representatives of Russian diasporas from 26 countries.¹⁶⁴ In September of the previous year, Struve had been elected chairman of the 72-strong Organizing Committee at a preliminary conference, which was comprised of delegates from “some one hundred émigré organizations.”¹⁶⁵ Alongside N. E. Markov II and Pyotr N. Krasnov, Ilyin had been elected in December 1925 as a delegate for the Parisian organizational committee, at a meeting of 25 right-wing organizations in Berlin.¹⁶⁶

Although boycotted by followers of Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich and rattled by various political squabbles, the 1926 congress managed to unite the majority of participants in calling on Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich to head the Russian monarchists in emigration—a feat notably accomplished by Struve.¹⁶⁷ This happened more than two years after Kirill Vladimirovich had arbitrarily assumed the title of “Emperor of All Russia” in exile.

According to Tsygankov:

In the spring of 1926 Ilyin took part in the Russian Congress of Foreigners in Paris, where members of the conservative and monarchist wings of the emigration dominated, and delivered his speech on a “non-party monarchist ideal.” Since then, Ilyin became known as an ideologist of the White Movement and its foreign military organization ROVS...throughout the Russian diaspora.¹⁶⁸

Ilyin’s speech was printed in the Belgrade newspaper *Novoe vremia* and in Struve’s *Vozrozhdenie*.¹⁶⁹ The congress brought Ilyin in touch with numerous White dignitaries. Among them was Prince Nikolai B. Shcherbatov (1868–1943), a staunch supporter of the *Nikolaevichi*, whose subsequent promotion of Ilyin led to several business opportunities. From one of the oldest Russian noble families, Shcherbatov had held several high ministerial posts in Imperial Russia from 1895 until the October Revolution, when he moved to Bavaria.

Entente Internationale Anticommuniste

At the Russian Foreign Congress, Ilyin also became acquainted with Yury Lodyzhensky (1888–1977), and, subsequently, his brother Alexander Ilyich Lodyzhensky (1891–1954), whose contacts to powerful White circles

¹⁶⁴ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right*, 382; M. A. Kotenko and I. A. Domnin (eds.), *Rossiiskii zarubezhnyi s"ezd, 1926, Parizh: dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2006), 9.

¹⁶⁵ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right*, 381.

¹⁶⁶ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 277–278.

¹⁶⁷ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right*, 383 ff.

¹⁶⁸ Tsygankov, “Ivan Il'in.”

¹⁶⁹ Ivan Ilyin, “Zarubezhnyi s"yezd. Tezisy,” *Novoe Vremia*, Belgrade, April 14, 1926, Issue 1488, 2; “Rech' I. A. Il'ina,” *Vozrozhdeniie*, Paris, April 10, 1926, Issue 312, 1.

provided new opportunities for Ilyin.¹⁷⁰ The brothers were Whites of the first hour, and both became fiercely anti-communist activists in exile. Yuri Lodyzhensky had settled in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1921, where he headed the Russian Red Cross Society and, in 1924, co-founded the International Anticommunist Alliance (*Entente Internationale Anticommuniste*, EIA, a.k.a. Aubert League), which his brother also joined.¹⁷¹ The EIA was a quasi-intelligence organization founded in explicit opposition to the Communist Third International (Comintern), with funds raised by the Swiss lawyer Théodore Aubert. Active from 1924 to 1950, the EIA was conceived as an umbrella group of anti-communist organizations from all around the world and included German Nazi-affiliated groups.

In 1924, a “Russian Section” of the EIA emerged, headed by Yuri Lodyzhensky, which liaised *inter alia* with the Bavaria-based Duke George Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg of the Brotherhood of Russian Truth, who became a strong supporter of Ilyin.¹⁷² Lodyzhensky also brought the Latvian Prince Anatoly Lieven (1872–1937) on board, who doubled as head of the ROVS and the Brotherhood of Russian Truth in Latvia with which Ilyin came to develop special ties.¹⁷³ According to historian Stéphanie Roulin, Ilyin subsequently “became the EIA’s main Russian correspondent in Germany and provided a point of contact with national circles in Germany.”¹⁷⁴ Ilyin stayed in touch with the Lodyzhenskys until the end of his life, who became an important point of contact following Ilyin’s second exile in Switzerland.¹⁷⁵

Beloe Delo (1926)

Following the 1926 congress, Ilyin consolidated his intimate collaboration with the ROVS commander Pyotr Wrangel and his deputy Alexei von

¹⁷⁰ L.V. Bogatyreva and N. Bazanov, “Russkaia emigratsiia o grazhdanskoi voine 1917–1922 godov,” *Vestnik RKHGA* 19, No. 1 (2018): 23–31, 26, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/Russkaia-emigratsiya-o-grazhdanskoy-voyne-1917-1922-godov>.

¹⁷¹ Stéphanie Roulin, *Un Credo Anticommuniste : La Commission Pro Deo de l'Entente Internationale Anticommuniste, Ou, La Dimension Religieuse d'un Combat Politique : 1924–1945* (Lausanne: Antipodes, 2010), 26, 30 ff.

¹⁷² Roulin, *Un Credo Anticommuniste*, 36, 41.

¹⁷³ Roulin, *Un Credo Anticommuniste*, 31, 37.

¹⁷⁴ Roulin, *Un Credo Anticommuniste*, 41.

¹⁷⁵ “Pis’ma Il’ina I. A. Lodyzhenskomu Aleksandru Il’ichu. 2 Pis’ma. Chernoviki,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-ilina-i-a-lodyzhenskomu-aleksandru-ilichu-2-pisma-chernoviki; “Pis’ma Il’ina I. A. Lodyzhenskim Aleksandru Il’ichu i Iuriiu Il’ichu. 5 Pisem. Kopii,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-ilina-i-a-lodyzhenskim-aleksandru-ilichu-i-iuriiyu-ilichu-5-pisem-kopii; “Pis’mo [Lodyzhenskogo Aleksandra Il’icha] Il’inu I. A.,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-lodyzhenskogo-aleksandra-ilicha-ilinu-i-a.

Lampe, who from 1924 onwards headed the second department of the ROVS in Berlin. Ilyin joined their cause to establish an anti-Soviet intelligence project in conjunction with the Brotherhood of Russian Truth (BRT), another White organization that had Wrangel's blessing. Although independent from the ROVS, BRT members were often connected to the former organization as well, including von Lampe.¹⁷⁶ Ilyin himself has never been identified as a member of the BRT; however, he aided in its covert efforts and created propaganda for the organization.

Just as the ROVS, the BRT was actively involved in the subversion of the young Soviet Union by means of terrorism and White propaganda.¹⁷⁷ The organization emerged after Sergey Sokolov-Krechetov (1878–1936) became "an unofficial trusted political correspondent" of Wrangel in Paris, where in 1921 he founded the newspaper *Russkaia pravda* with funds provided by the "black baron." According to Bazanov, *Russkaia pravda* was "under the supervision of a special political department of the Main Command...led by General A. P. Kutevov," which in June 1922 transformed "into a military-political organization, the Brotherhood of Russian Truth."¹⁷⁸ The BRT existed until 1934, and some of its organizations survived until 1940.¹⁷⁹

When, in 1926, the ROVS and the BRT embarked on their joint intelligence project, as a cover they opted for a publishing endeavor headed by von Lampe, which sought to collect texts by the White emigration addressing the revolutionary years. To that end, from 1926 until 1933, von Lampe edited a series of six books—the almanac *The White Cause: A Chronicle of the White Struggle*—printed by the BRT's publishing house Bronze Horseman.¹⁸⁰ The project, which had been discussed since 1923, originated with von Lampe and, according to Lisitsa, was "supported by A. P. Lieven, Duke G. N. Leuchtenberg and P. N. Wrangel."¹⁸¹ Ilyin subsequently provided the introduction to *Beloe Delo* under the title "The White Idea."¹⁸²

A credible case has been made that the Bronze Horseman served as a front organization for the BRT and its subversive operations; and the endeavor of collecting submissions for *Beloe Delo* was just a cover for the ROVS and the BRT to keep in touch with White dignitaries scattered around Europe. Bazanov, referencing the Russian historian V. G. Bortnevsky, states "that the editorial office of the almanac *Beloie Delo*...became the organizational center of the second department of the ROVS, headed by von Lampe, who relied on the money he received from the distribution of the almanac."¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 72.

¹⁷⁷ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 7.

¹⁷⁸ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 29.

¹⁷⁹ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 7.

¹⁸⁰ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 88.

¹⁸¹ Lisitsa, *Dnevnik, Pisma, Dokumenty*, 551.

¹⁸² Ivan Ilyin, "Belaia Ideia (Vmesto predisloviia)," in *Beloe delo*, Volume 1 (Berlin: Mednyi vsadnik, 1926), 7–15.

¹⁸³ V. G. Bortnevsky referenced in Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 72.



From left to right: Bottom row: Elena Georgievna Tribinskaya (née Duchess of Leuchtenberg), Pyotr Wrangel, Arkady Konstantinovich Tribinsky. Standing: Duchess Olga Nikolaevna of Leuchtenberg, Nikolai Mikhailovich Kotlyarevsky (secretary of General Wrangel), Natalia Nikolaevna Ilyina, Sergei Alekseevich Sokolov, Ivan Ilyin, Alexei Alexandrovich von Lampe. At Leuchtenberg's castle in Seeon, Bavaria. July 2, 1926. Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

According to Bazanov, the initial “coordination of the publication of the collection [*Beloe Delo*] and discussion of political issues took place at Seeon Castle of G. N. Leuchtenberg in early July 1926.”¹⁸⁴ A photo from this high-level meeting shows Ilyin together with the ROVS leaders, Wrangel and von Lampe, at Seeon Castle in Bavaria, alongside several other important White figures, including Sergey Sokolov-Krechetov, founder of the BRT and director of the Bronze Horseman.¹⁸⁵

Ilyin was possibly already acquainted with the castle's owner, Duke George Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg, since as discussed above, the latter's

¹⁸⁴ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 88.

¹⁸⁵ “Okruzheniye: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh,” *Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina* (1883–1954), <https://web.archive.org/web/20230407143641/http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-FOTOALBOMY/fotoalbomy-okruzhenie.html>.

bookstore and publishing house, Grad Kitezh, had taken on the distribution of Ilyin's book, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, a year earlier. Besides funding various publishing endeavors, including the Bronze Horseman, Leuchtenberg was also involved in the militant White underground.

Together with Nikolai Poznyakov, Leuchtenberg had set up the Banque Slave du Midi around 1923, "to financially support [Alexander] Kutepov's combat group—clandestine activities in the USSR," according to a White comrade-in-arms, Arkady Petrovich Stolypin (1903–1990).¹⁸⁶ Stolypin is most likely referring to the Combat organization of General Kutepov, the secret organization created within the ROVS in 1922 for reconnaissance and sabotage activities in the territory of the USSR.

That Ilyin must have been intimately familiar with these developments is indicated by a trip he and his wife took in August 1927 to South Tyrol, Italy, alongside two people involved in the Banque Slave du Midi through which funds for Alexander Kutepov's "clandestine activities" were funneled: Arkady Stolypin and his brother-in-law, Vadim Grigorievich Volkonsky (1895–1973).¹⁸⁷ When the Banque Slave du Midi was close to bankruptcy in 1926, Volkonsky replenished the funds and appointed Stolypin as secretary of the bank.¹⁸⁸ Stolypin later became the head of the French NTS section between 1941 and 1948. Ilyin possibly knew the wealthy Volkonskys since 1923, since a picture of him and his wife was found as part of Ilyin's estate with a dedication dated to that year.¹⁸⁹

Although no details are known about the 1927 meeting, it must have had something to do with Alexander Kutepov, since that year, when the Inner Line expanded its efforts, Ilyin was apparently instructed by Wrangel to help organize an anti-Bolshevik organization that aimed to remedy Kutepov's shortcomings. Lisitsa described the plans as follows:

...in 1927, General Wrangel and his most trusted associates, including Ilyin, were collaborating to create a secret organization for the active anti-Bolshevik struggle in Soviet Russia (as a counter-weight to Kutepov's, which continued to operate despite its failures and public exposure). The editors of *Beloe Delo* were to be moved to Paris to establish "a front for the conspiratorial center," while the combined roles of editor and director of the "work inside Russia" should be taken over by A. A. von Lampe. It was planned to organize editorial offices in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Romania, which in

¹⁸⁶ Arkady Stolypin [Arcady Stolypine], *De l'empire à l'exil : mémoires* (Albin Michel, 1996), 212. Document listing all the historical banks in France, Archives Nationales, https://web.archive.org/web/20161126131127/http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/cam/2/egf/donnees_efg/65_AQ+206_AQ+2006_065M/65_AQ_INV.pdf.

¹⁸⁷ Naslediye russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, "Okruzheniye: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh."

¹⁸⁸ Stolypin, *De l'empire à l'exil*, 212.

¹⁸⁹ "3-138. Volkonskaia E. i Volkonskii V.G. Fotografiia s darstvennoi nadpis'iu. - 1l.," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmg.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-3-138.pdf>.

fact were to be engaged in intelligence activities; and the provision of one or more lines of communication from the border to one of the Russian centers, "to ensure the acquisition of firearms and, if possible, handheld explosive projectiles."¹⁹⁰

The decision to go around Kutepov might be rooted in the fact that the latter's operations were notoriously infiltrated by OGPU agents, and his ideas about the course of anti-Bolshevik efforts differed considerably from those of Wrangel's. According to a CIA study, "In Paris, General Kutepov, with neither the patience or foresight of Wrangel, decided to follow an independent course.... Terrorism on a large scale was needed. This would confuse the Bolsheviks, force them to commit blunders, and ultimately bring about the collapse of their regime."¹⁹¹

Although little is known about *Beloe Delo's* secret efforts, they must have been severely hampered shortly after they began. In 1928, General Wrangel died; his master, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, followed suit a year later, who since 1925 had struggled with cancer. After Wrangel's death, Kutepov became commander of the ROVS and took charge of *Beloe Delo*, which caused considerable internal discontent among those involved. Ilyin's close friend Ivan Shmelev, who presumably engaged in the secret



From left to right: Arkady Stolyov, Natalia Elena, Vadim Volkonsky, Elena Volkonskaya, Ivan Ilyin. *Izvestia, Pisma, Dokumenty*, 532.

¹⁹⁰ Ilyin, *Dnevnik, Pisma, Dokumenty*, 532. Source: <https://pbmgu.ru>
¹⁹¹ "The Trust (internal CIA study, completed ca. March 1969)," 10, in "Response to Arnold Beichman, Hoover Institution, regarding trust paper," Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp90g01353r001700020002-4>.

Beloe Delo endeavors, wrote to Ilyin from Paris in May 1928, barely a month after Wrangel died, that “our rooms were handed over to the Kutepovs.”¹⁹² However, Kutepov’s leadership was also cut short, when he was kidnapped in January 1930 by Soviet intelligence agents and died in the process, allegedly of a heart attack.

Russian Bell (1927–1930)

Although details about Ilyin’s role in the “secret organization for the active anti-Bolshevik struggle” under the cover of *Beloe Delo* are unavailable, in the summer of 1927, the year that the organization was devised, Ilyin became the publisher and editor of a White journal called *Russkii kolokol*.¹⁹³ This leaves room to speculate whether the *Russian Bell* was Ilyin’s cover for working with Wrangel’s “secret organization.” According to Lisitsa, “Ilyin conceived his journal after he terminated his cooperation with the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie* in protest against the dismissal of its editor-in-chief, P. B. Struve.”¹⁹⁴

In the *Russkii kolokol*, printed in Berlin, Ilyin made openly pro-Nazi propaganda. Peter states that in the journal, Ilyin “praised Russian fascism (along with Italian, German, and Hungarian) as part of a new world chivalry, with which humanity responds to the attack of godlessness, dishonor and greed.”¹⁹⁵ The *Russkii kolokol* was well received among Whites and fascists alike. According to Lisitsa:

Positive reviews were sent to Ilyin by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky); Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky); Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky); Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich; the White generals A. P. Kutepov, A. M. Dragomirov, and H. F. Ern; the head of the Government Commissioner for Russian refugees in Serbia, S. N. Paleolog; Lieutenant-General, Ataman of the Kuban Cossack Troops, A. P. Filimonov; the White Army officer K. K. Smirnov; the writer I. S. Shmelev; the businessman N. Gromov; a figure of the Aubert League, Y. I. Lodyzhensky; directress of the Mariinsky Female Institute in Serbia N. N. Lukonina; and others. Positive reviews were published by the Paris newspapers *Vozrozhdenie* (I. S. Shmelev, N. N. Chebyshev, V. L.), *Rossiia i slavianstvo* (Sol) and *Rossiua* (P. B. Struve, K. Zaitsev), the Belgrade newspaper *Novoe vremia* (M. A. Suvorin, V. Davatz, N. Rybinsky, Starozhil, V. K.), the Riga newspaper *Slovo* (N. Kedrov, N. Rusin, S., R. Zile),

¹⁹² Lisitsa (ed.), Ilyin, *Perepiska dvukh Ivanov (1927–1934)*, Vol. 1, 98.

¹⁹³ All issues of Russian Bell (1–9) are available online: https://vtoraya-literatura.com/razdel_2044_str_1.html.

¹⁹⁴ Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Russkii Kolokol. Zhurnal volevoy idei* (Moscow: Pravoslavnyi Sviato-tikhonovskii Gumanitarnyi Universitet, 2008), 816.

¹⁹⁵ Peter, “Ivan Il’in i fashizm.”

the Harbin newspaper *Russkoe slovo* (A. A. Gryzov), and the Tianjin newspaper *Nash Put'*.¹⁹⁶

The *Russkii kolokol* brought together a group of notorious White militants and propagandists favorable to the rise of fascism and the Nazi movement, many of whom would collaborate with the Nazis during WWII (and with Western intelligence after the war). How pertinent these tendencies were is illustrated by some of their biographies:

- Pyotr Nikolaevich Krasnov (1869–1947) had already collaborated with the Germans during the Russian Civil War. In June 1918, he wrote a letter to Wilhelm II offering the vassalage of the Don Cossacks to the Germans. During WWII, Krasnov headed the Cossack Central Office of Alfred Rosenberg's *Ostministerium*, and helped to mobilize Cossacks for the Wehrmacht.¹⁹⁷
- Boris Alexandrovich Shteifon (1881–1945), was a lieutenant general who, in the summer of 1918, headed the underground volunteer center in Kharkov together with General von Lampe and was involved in the transfer of officers to the Volunteer Army during the German occupation of Ukraine under Simon Petliura's puppet regime.¹⁹⁸ He was the last commander of the collaborationist Russian Security Corps in the Balkans, which swore allegiance to Hitler and reported to SS-*Gruppenführer* F. Neuhausen, head of the occupation administration in Yugoslavia. In January 1945, Shteifon came under the command of the traitor General Vlasov, and finally killed himself at the end of the war.¹⁹⁹
- Nikolai Nikolayevich Golovin (1875–1944) was a White general who emigrated to France in the course of the Russian Civil War. On the instruction of Pyotr Wrangel in 1921, Golovin started to draw up a curriculum for a military academy that could prepare White émigré officers for the future war against the USSR. His coursework was used among exiles in numerous countries, and the efforts culminated in the creation of the Foreign Higher Military Science Courses in 1927, designated as a successor to the Imperial Nikolaev Military Academy.²⁰⁰ According to the military historian Ofer Fridman, "From 1926 to 1940, Golovin was the official representative of the Hoover Military Library in Paris," and after that "was engaged in sending Russian volunteers to

¹⁹⁶ Ilyin, *Russkii Kolokol*, 816–817.

¹⁹⁷ Brent Mueggenberg, *The Cossack Struggle against Communism, 1917–1945* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2019), 248.

¹⁹⁸ Ilyin, *Russkii Kolokol*, 837.

¹⁹⁹ Russian State Archive for Social and Political History (ed.), *The Vlasov Case: History of a Betrayal, 1945–1946*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2020), 379.

²⁰⁰ N. D. Karpov, *Krym—Gallipoli—Balkany* (Moscow: Russkii put', 1998), 144–145.

work in Germany and restaffing the Russian Liberation Army with officers.”²⁰¹

- Nikolai Sergeyevich Arsenyev (1888–1977) was a prominent White émigré writer, who served in the Political Department of the Volunteer Army during the Russian Civil War. A Nazi-collaborator, from 1941 to 1942 Arsenyev served at the Eastern front as a Russian translator for the Wehrmacht with the rank of *Sonderführer*, who was also consulted by the Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce.²⁰² Until 1944, he taught at the theological department of the University of Königsberg under the supervision of the Nazi Ministry of Science, Education and Culture. From 1945 to 1947 he lived in Paris and lectured at Sorbonne and the Catholic University. In 1947, he settled in the US with the help of the Tolstoy Foundation (thus avoiding extradition to the USSR), taught at the St. Vladimir’s Theological Seminary in New York, and lectured at the University of Montreal.²⁰³ He was chairman of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the USA from 1971 to 1977, which included several of Ilyin’s former beneficiaries and admirers.
- Nikolai A. Tsurikov (1886–1957) (literary aliases Ivan Belenikhin, Z) was a prominent White émigré figure and writer, whose father, General Tsurikov, remained a military specialist in the service of the Red Army. Tsurikov had studied at the Moscow University Faculty of Law while Ilyin was teaching there. During the Russian Civil War, he joined the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, then the Russian Army. In 1923, Tsurikov settled in Prague where he became an eminent anti-Bolshevik journalist and public figure. A close collaborator of Struve, Tsurikov was a member of the editorial board of *Rossii i slavianstvo* and contributed to various Russian émigré periodicals, including *Russkaia mysl* and *Vozrozhdenie*.²⁰⁴ As a ROVS member, he cooperated closely with Alexander Kutepov and was an active proponent of terrorism against the Soviet Union. During WWII, Tsurikov joined the efforts of the collaborationist Russian Liberation Army. After the war, he headed the German section of the US-supported anti-communist Union of Struggle for the Freedom of Russia (SBSR).²⁰⁵ Residing in Munich, he

²⁰¹ Ofer Fridman (ed.), *Strategiia: The Foundations of the Russian Art of Strategy* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2021). (electronic version)

²⁰² Igor Petrov, “Otvechat’ v sude za unizhenie chesti i dostoinstva,” Igor Petrov (Blog), January 15, 2013, <https://labas.livejournal.com/994997.html>

²⁰³ Lidia Dovydenko, “Russkii filosof v Königsberge,” *Al’manakh “Russkii Mir”*, No. 3 (February 23, 2010): 111–23, 123, <http://almanax.russculture.ru/archives/1316>; Constantine Belousow and Nicholas Arseniev et al., eds., *Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the USA*, vol. X (New York: Association of Russian-American Scholars in the USA, 1976), 296, https://vtoraya-literatura.com/pdf/zapiski_russkoj_akademicheskoi_gruppy_v_usa_vol_10_1976__ocr.pdf.

²⁰⁴ “Tsurikov Nikolai Aleksandrovich,” *Religioznye deiateli Russkogo Zarubezh’ia*, http://zarubezhje.narod.ru/tya/ts_004.htm.

²⁰⁵ H. Poltoratsky, “N. A. Tsurikov,” *Dobrovolets, politika i literatura*, No. 49–50, <http://freiwillige.ru/h-a-curikov/>.

participated in the creation of ratlines that helped Russian collaborators elude denazification and repatriation to the Soviet Union.

- And last but not least, the *Russkii kolokol* included Ekaterina Mironovna Mironova, who wrote under the pseudonym “E. M. Gaug,” whom Yuri Lisitsa describes as “a follower of the ideas (‘Aryanism’) of H. S. Chamberlain and Emil Medtner,” the older brother of Ilyin’s close friend Nikolai Medtner.²⁰⁶

The first few issues of the *Russkii kolokol* were financed by the Moscow merchant Nikolai Gromov, who had left Russia shortly before.²⁰⁷ Other sponsors included the famous composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, with whom Ilyin was frequently in contact between 1927 and 1946.²⁰⁸ The contact with Rachmaninoff may have been established by Ilyin’s friend Nikolai Medtner, whom Rachmaninoff had helped in leaving the Soviet Union in 1924 by securing him a tour in the United States and Canada. The former Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Karel Petrovich Kramář, and his

²⁰⁶ Ilyin, *Russkii Kolokol*, 836.

²⁰⁷ Iuri Lisitsa, “Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ I. A. Il’ina v emigratsii,” *Russkoe zarubezh’e*, №1, 2011, 131, <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/zhizn-i-deyatelnost-i-a-ilina-v-emigratsii>.

²⁰⁸ “Sergei Rachmaninoff Archive,” Library of Congress, 2015, https://findingaids.loc.gov/exist_collections/ead3pdf/music/2015/mu015003.pdf.

Russian wife, Nadezhda Nikolaevna Kramář, also supported the *Russkii kolokol*.²⁰⁹

Furthermore, the journal received funds from Vladimir Bari, the vice president of the I. I. Sikorsky Corporation of Igor Sikorsky, whom Lisitsa suspects to be the actual sponsor.²¹⁰ Ilyin remained in touch with Sikorsky



Igor Sikorsky with his family near his home from 1936.

Source: <https://nbgmu.ru>

and his wife, and they both sporadically exchanged letters from 1936 to 1947.²¹¹ It should be noted that in the year the *Russkii kolokol* was

²⁰⁹ Lisitsa, "Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' I. A. Il'ina," 131.

²¹⁰ Statement by Iurii Lisitsa during a presentation on September 22, 2021. "Prezentatsiia dvukhtomnika trudov filosa i publitsista Ivana Il'ina proshla v Knizhnom klube 'Dostoyevskii'," Rossiskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo, September 22, 2021, <https://rvio.histrf.ru/activities/news/prezentaciya-dvukhtomnika-trudov-filosa-i-publicista-ivana-ilina-proshla-v-knizhnom-klube-dostoyevskij>.

²¹¹ "Pis'mo Sikorskoy Elizavety Il'inu I. A.," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-sikorskoy-elizavety-ilinu-i-a; "Pis'ma Sikorskogo Igorya Ivanovicha Il'inu I. A. 4 Pis'ma," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-sikorskogo-igorya-ivanovicha-ilinu-i-a-4-pisma. "Pis'mo Il'ina I. A. Sikorskomu Igoryu Ivanovichu," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in,

established, Sikorsky was involved in a never realized plot in the vein of the mythical "Spring Intervention." To that end, Colonel Dementiev of the Union of Russian Sovereign People (*Soiuz Russkikh Gosudarevykh Liudei*), a White organization under the patronage of Grand Duke Kirill's daughter, Grand Duchess Kira Kirillovna, devised a plan to land 3,000 troops with airplanes to the Don region provided by the Sikorsky Corporation and then raise local Cossack forces to march on Moscow.²¹²

Sikorsky also appears in the orbit of the Brotherhood of Russian Truth. He chaired the American section of the Russian Liberation Treasury in memory of the Tsar Martyr Nicholas II (*Russkaia Osvoboditel'naia Kazna v Pamiat' Tsaria-Muchenika Nikolaia II*, ROK), which financed the activities of the BRT from 1930 onwards; he was succeeded by the infamous Nazi-sympathizer and fellow White émigré, Anastasy Vonsiatsky (1898–1965).²¹³ It is known that as of 1929, Vonsiatsky was involved in the BRT, and financed several of its publications in the US and abroad.²¹⁴ Subsequently, he traveled to Europe and, according to Bazanov, delivered "gas bombs and special rubber sticks with tear gas to members of the BRT, as well as police rubber batons from the US police arsenal."²¹⁵

As mentioned above, the years in which the *Russian Bell* was published were characterized by considerable upheavals within the White movement. The deaths of Wrangel and of Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich were heavy blows to the *Nikolaevichi* and brought back questions of alignment. This concerned firstly the matter of the "legitimate" heir to the throne in exile. Since Nicholas Nikolaevich had died without offspring, there was no contender in his line to rally behind. This vacuum gave his Nazi-aligned competitor, Grand Duke Kirill Kirillovich, a natural advantage, with the *Kirillovichi* clearly winning the upper hand.

Consequently, the divide deepened between those Whites who sought support from the former Entente powers and those who rallied behind the burgeoning Nazi movement in Germany. This found expression in a growing divide between the major factions of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile, with the Paris-based Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe leaning towards the former Entente, and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCORA) siding with Germany, and subsequently the Nazis.

https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-ilina-i-a-sikorskomu-igoryu-ivanovichu.

²¹² A. V. Seregin, "Soyuz russkikh gosudarevykh liudei v emigratsii i plany organizatsii Vesennego podkhoda v SSSR. Proekt I. I. Sikorskogo," *Rossiiskii gumanitarnyi zhurnal* 4, No. 3 (2015): 187–97, 192 ff., <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/soyuz-russkih-gosudarevykh-lyudey-v-emigratsii-i-plan-y-organizatsii-vesennego-pohoda-v-sssr-proekt-i-i-sikorskogo>.

²¹³ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 43.

²¹⁴ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 63.

²¹⁵ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 100.

Amidst these heavy upheavals, Ilyin was involved in the planning of at least two events intended to nudge the *Nikolaevichi* towards supporting Kirill: the burgeoning Nazi movement and the ROCOR. After Wrangel's death in 1928, it was most likely "Ilyin [who] planned a requiem for Wrangel that should also be open for German sympathizers," according to Schlögel; however, "the plan failed over disunity, whether Tikhon [Lyaschenko, ROCOR Bishop of Berlin and Germany] or Eulogius [head of the Paris-based Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox churches in Western Europe] should lead the mess."²¹⁶ And in May 1928, Ilyin and von Lampe appeared among the speakers at an event in Berlin commemorating Wrangel's death, organized in collaboration with the Russian National Student Association, as well as "non-party, national and militaristic associations."²¹⁷

In that period Ilyin occupied several powerful positions in the Russian emigration. In January 1929, he was elected to the board of the Russian-German School Society (*Russko-Nemetskoe Shkol'noe Obshchestvo*), alongside von Lampe and others.²¹⁸ As of April 1930, Ilyin was the chairman of the influential Union of Russian Journalists and Writers in Germany (*Soiuz Russkikh Zhurnal'istov i Literat'orov v Germanii*, SRZL) in Berlin, whose secretary at the time was Vladimir M. Despotuli.²¹⁹ After the Nazis' seizure of power, Despotuli became the longtime editor-in-chief of the regime-approved Russian-language newspaper *Novoe slovo*, which existed throughout the Nazi era.²²⁰

First connections to the NTS

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Ilyin notably intensified his collaboration with White organizations sympathizing with the Nazis. The most important of them was arguably the Russian émigré group National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS). (In the literature, the organization is often simply denoted as NTS. However, it has gone through various organizational and name changes throughout its existence.)

Its first iteration, the National Youth Union (*Natsional'nyi Soiuz Molodezhi*, NSM), was comprised of young ROVS cadres, which until 1930 were organized in various national chapters under the overall leadership of Alexander Kutepov. Although there are no indications that Ilyin had worked with the NSM, *Russkii kolokol* was very popular among its cadres, according to Yuri Lisitsa. M. V. Nazarov states in a 1980 article by the NTS-affiliated *Posev* journal: "Even after its publication was discontinued, the *Russkii kolokol*, according to the testimony of senior NTS members, was for

²¹⁶ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 353.

²¹⁷ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 355.

²¹⁸ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 373.

²¹⁹ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 403.

²²⁰ Johannes Baur, *Die russische Kolonie in München 1900–1945: deutsch-russische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 300.

a long time still something of a textbook for them. It was believed that everyone should read it.”²²¹

Ilyin appeared in the organization's orbit latest after Kutepov's death in 1930. At that point, the NSM underwent some substantial changes and took a decisively pro-German and pro-Nazi course. When the MI6-controlled Inner Line's existence had become widely known among ROVS youths, “the collaborators in the ‘Inner Line’ were removed from the ranks,”²²² and the remnants regrouped in the framework of the umbrella organization National Union of Russian Youth Abroad (*Natsional'nyi Soiuz Russkoi Molodezhi za Rubezhom*; NSRM). The NSRM came under the direction of Sergei Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg (1903–1966), the nephew of the aforementioned Georges Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg. He chaired the NSRM from 1930 to 1934, renamed in 1931 as the National Union of the New Generation (NSNP, 1931–1936).²²³

Leuchtenberg stayed in Germany during the entire Nazi period and was active in Nazi-affiliated White Russian circles. Under Leuchtenberg, the organization started welcoming Nazism, as evidenced by articles of the NSNP's newspaper *Za Rossiю*. An article from a February 1933 issue reads: “The great event of recent times was Adolph Hitler's accession to power. The leader of the German National Socialists, the leader of the national revolution, and the harbinger of social reforms has come to power....”²²⁴ The NSNP positioned itself clearly with a dictatorship as the most suitable form of government for a future Russia.²²⁵

Russian Section of the EIA

In restructuring the ROVS youth wing after Kutepov's death in 1930, the Russian Section of the International Anti-Communist League (EIA) played

²²¹ M.V. Nazarov, “Russkii kolokol. Zhurnal volevoi idei,” *Posev*, No. 10, 1980, <https://rusidea.org/7006>.

²²² Central Intelligence Agency, “Russian Emigrant Organizations,” 7.

²²³ “Leikhtenbergskiy Sergei Nikolaevich,” *Narodno-Trudovogo Soiuza Rossiiskikh Solidaristov*, May 31, 2013, <http://ntsrs.ru/content/leyhtenbergskiy-sergey-nikolaevich>. During WWII, S. N. von Leuchtenberg worked as an interpreter for the Nazi regime and then for the Americans, when they occupied Leipzig. After the war, Leuchtenberg emigrated to the US and became an instructor at a school for military interpreters in San Francisco, most likely the Defense Language Institute in Monterey.

²²⁴ “Hitler in Power,” *Za Rossiю*, 1933, quoted in Boris L. Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1955), 117, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001233183>.

²²⁵ “While the emigration persisted in the time-worn debate monarchy versus the republic — life and contemporary events generated a new form of political life: the dictatorship [...] Dictatorship means to us strong authority, the only way in which a national revolution can be realized and a firm structure set u [...] We are opposed to the rule of parties and partisanship in politics.” *Za Rossiю*, June 1933, quoted in Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration*, 118.

an eminent role, with which Ilyin was closely associated. From June 25–27, 1930, the Russian Section of the EIA organized a congress in Saint-Julien-en-Genevois with the aim of uniting all the existing sections of the ROVS youth wing scattered throughout Europe.

The congress was conceived as a preliminary gathering of representatives from various national NSM chapters with the aim of merging them into a common umbrella organization (NSRM). Among the delegates were notably a Volkonsky Prince, Baron Boris Koeppen, who had financed the 1925 edition of Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, and two Dukes of Leuchtenberg, including the future chairman of the NSRM Sergey Nikolaevich of Leuchtenberg.²²⁶

²²⁶ "On June 25–27, 1930 in the small town of Saint-Julien, not far from Geneva, at the invitation of the secretary of the Russian section of the Anti-Communist League, A. I. Lodyzhensky (Aubert League), a preliminary congress of representatives of the unions from different countries was held with the aim of merging them into a common National Union of Russian Youth - NSRM. The congress was prepared by the Organizational Bureau in Paris. The participants of the congress in Saint-Julien were: from France - F.I. Bostrem, Prince Volkonsky, Bor. Koeppen, V. B. Kondratiev, Duke S. N. Leuchtenberg, B. I. Nedrigailo, Khudoshin, Petukhov, N. N. Ruzsky, N.V. Subbotin, Baron Ungern-Sternberg, Count N. D. Sheremetev, V. V. Jagiello; from Bulgaria - A. A. Brauner and M. I. Seliverstov; from Holland - V. S. Tregubov; from Germany - Duke D. G. Leuchtenberg; from Norway - Savabini; from Czechoslovakia - E.V. Kalikin; from Latvia - R. M. Zile; from Yugoslavia - V. D. Poremsky; from Switzerland - Prince K.A. Gorchakov. On June 27, the final meeting of the authorized representatives of the NSRM was held, which was attended by: Duke S. N. Leuchtenberg F. I. Bostrem, Khudoshin, E.V. Kalikin, A. A. Brauner, M. I. Seliverstov, V. D. Poremsky and V. S. Tregubov. A. A. Brauner was elected Chairman and V. D. Poremsky was elected Secretary. The meeting discussed the creation of the NSRM as a coherent organization, the location of its headquarters, and the general statutes. It was decided that the solution of these questions should be delegated to the congress of union leaders in Belgrade, which was held in Belgrade from July 1 to 5, 1930." Boris Prianishnikoff, *Novopoletsy* (Silver Spring, Md.: 1986), 7–8.



A group photo of Ilyin's associates at the 1930 St. Julien Congress of the Aubert League. They include Yury Lodyzhensky with his wife (4th and 5th from the left), Alexander Lodyzhensky (2nd from the right), B. Nikolsky with his wife, and Roman M. Zile (3rd from the right). Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

It can be presumed that Ilyin was part of this seminal meeting, since a picture from 1930 exists that depicts him in Saint-Julien alongside one of the congress's participants, Roman Zile; another one shows Zile alongside other congress attendees, including Alexander Lodyzhensky, Yury Lodyzhensky with his wife, and a certain B. A. Nikolsky with his wife.²²⁷

A year after the congress, in 1931, the Lodyzhensky brothers created the Russian Christian Workers' Movement (*Russkoe Trudovoe Khristianskoe Dvizhenie*, RTKD) from the Russian Section of the EIA, with which Ilyin also closely collaborated in the years to come.²²⁸ Based in Saint-Julien-en-

²²⁷ "3-98. Il'in I.A. i Zile R.M. Fotografiia. 1930. - 1l.," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, www.nbmggu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-3-098.pdf; Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, "Okruzhenie: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh."

²²⁸ Laura Pettinaroli, "Stéphanie Roulin : Un credo anticommuniste. La Commission Pro Deo de l'Entente internationale anticommuniste ou la dimension religieuse d'un combat politique (1924–1945) Lausanne, Antipodes, 2010, 517," *Annales*.

Genevois, the RTKD was presided over by Alexander Lodyzhensky and notably included the White General Nikolai Golovin, a contributor to Ilyin's *Russkii kolokol*. The RTKD had strong ties to the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, including Archpriest Sergei Ivanovich Orlov (1864–1944), who had established several ROCOR parishes in Switzerland and France.²²⁹ Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovskii) (1873–1965), second First Hierarch of ROCOR, sponsored “spiritual development and Christian morality courses” for children organized by the RTKD.²³⁰ In 1932 and 1933, two of Ilyin's articles appeared in the RTKD journal *Novyi put'* published in Geneva, titled “Take care of your family” and “The spiritual meaning of our work.”²³¹

Activities in Switzerland, France, and Latvia

Ilyin's connections to Switzerland generally intensified in the late interwar period. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Ilyin traveled there several times, and he would ultimately end up in the country in 1938. Ilyin elaborated on some of those visits in his 1938 application for Swiss residency:

I have spoken several times in Switzerland by invitation. For example, in 1925 I gave several lectures at the Zurich Psychological Club on religious-philosophical problems. In 1927, I spoke at the Basel Sample Fair (*Mustermesse*) about the possible investment of the Swiss economy in my fatherland, and at the Basel Liberal District Association about the sociological causes of Bolshevism. In 1932, I gave two lectures in Zurich—one...on “Spirit as Need and Problem of the Present” and the second on a problem of art criticism.²³²

The 1927 lecture was given to the Economic Council of the Basel National Economy Association, titled “On the Failure of Communism in Russia Regarding the Basic Economic Laws.”²³³ In 1931, Ilyin also appeared as a

Histoire, Sciences Sociales 69, No. 1 (March 13, 2014): 187–296, 276; Iurii (George) Lodyzhensky, *Face au communisme (1905–1950): Quand Genève était le centre du mouvement anticommuniste international* (Geneva: Slatkine, 2009), 422–423.

²²⁹ Bishop Leonty (Bartoshevich), “Prisnopamiatnyi o. Sergey Orlov, Nastoiatel' Zhenevskogo Khrama,” *Tserkovnyi golos*, December 25, 1955, <https://web.archive.org/web/20201030143404/https://pisma08.livejournal.com/105079.html>; Roulin, *Un Credo Anticommuniste*, 157.

²³⁰ Marlene Laruelle et al., “Chapter 2: The White Russian Hub in France,” *White Russians and the International Far Right*, http://whiterussianshistory.org/white_france.

²³¹ Ivan Ilyin, “Beregite sem'yu,” *Novyi put'*, Geneva, December 1932, Issue 10; Ivan Ilyin, “Dukhovnyi smysl nashego dela,” *Novyi put'*, Geneva, January 1933, Issue 11.

²³² Swiss Federal Archives, “Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers),” Dokument 4, 39 (Attachment 3 to Ilyin's application for residence).

²³³ “I.A. Il'in. Lektsiia na zasedanii ekonomicheskogo Soveta Bazel'skogo Soiuzu narodnoi ekonomiki “Über das Scheitern des Kommunismus in Russland an den Grundgesetzen des Wirtschaftslebens” (“O provale kommunizma v Rossii

speaker at the Rotary Club in Bern, organized with the help of Dr. Hans Trüb, who subsequently became Ilyin's supporter.²³⁴ That year in Geneva, the publishing house Struggle for Culture published the Russian-language brochure "The Poison of Bolshevism," which was translated into German and Swedish in 1932 and 1933, respectively.²³⁵



Ivan Ilyin and Roman M. Zile at Saint-Julien in 1930. Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

In the late 1920s, Ilyin was able to extend his publishing activity in France. Between 1928 and 1932, a few of Ilyin's articles appeared in the Parisian newspaper *Rossiia i Slavyanstvo*, edited by the Russian Bell contributor Nikolai Tsurikov, including a poem in the memory of the deceased Duke George of Leuchtenberg titled "Seeon Castle."²³⁶ Ilyin also contributed two articles to the magazine *Russkii Invalid* between 1928 and 1929, also published in Paris.

Furthermore, in the early 1930s, Ilyin consolidated his discernible Latvian ties. He particularly intensified his collaboration with the Latvia-based White Roman Martinovich (Erich) Zile (1900–1971), who subsequently became a "student and friend" of Ilyin

and eventually his secretary. In the period between 1931 and 1937, Zile invited Ilyin several times to lectures in Latvia on behalf of the Russian Academic Society (*Russkoe Akademicheskoe Obshchestvo*) in Riga, where Zile served as long-term chairman.²³⁷

Ilyin got acquainted with Zile in 1928, according to O. V. Lisitsa, most likely in the context of Wrangel's endeavor to build up a joint secret organization

otnositel'no osnovnykh ekonomicheskikh zakonov"), "Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-lekciya-na-zasedanii-ekonomicheskogo-soveta-bazelskogo-soyuza-narodnoy-ekonomiki-uber-das-scheitern-des-kommunismus-in-russland-an-den-grundgesetzen-des-wirtschaftslebens-o-provale-kommunizma-v-rossii-otnositelno-osnovnyh-ekonomicheskikh-zakonov.

²³⁴ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 33.

²³⁵ Ivan Ilyin, *Iad bol'shevizma* (Geneva: Bor'ba za kul'turu, 1931).

²³⁶ Ivan Ilyin, "Zamok Zeon (Svetloi pamiati gertsoga Georgiia Nikolaevicha Likhtenbergskogo. Stikhotvorenie), *Rossiia i slavyanstvo*, Paris, August 31, 1929, Issue 40, 2.

²³⁷ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 183.

with the Brotherhood of Russian Truth in the context of *Beloe Delo*.²³⁸ The two reportedly met in 1930 in Saint-Julien, presumably in the context of the EIA congress that year. The Odessa-born Zile had served in the White Army during the Russian Civil War. In 1922, he moved to Latvia, where he became a member of several White émigré organizations, most notably the BRT, of which he was the youth leader (pseudonym “Podgorny”).²³⁹

Zile had been a longtime associate of General Alexander Kutepov, the quasi-head of the ROVS youth and terrorist branches until 1930. Between 1924 and 1926, on the instructions of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and Kutepov, Captain F. F. Zeyberlich created a network of underground cells in Latvia, one of which Zile headed. According to the historian Maxim Solovyov, “The organization’s tasks included training personnel to transport groups to the USSR in the event of peasant uprisings and transporting propaganda literature to the USSR.”²⁴⁰ Zile was also a member of the ROVS and became the general representative of the NSNP and NTSNP in Latvia.²⁴¹ This is not surprising given that “A distinctive feature of the activities of the BRT in...Latvia was the almost complete organizational unity with the ROVS and the monarchist Nikolaevichi,” according to Bazanov.²⁴²

Ilyin’s first invitations to Latvia came when Zile worked as an official at the Latvian Joint Stock Bank (1929–1932), all the while controlling the BRT’s intelligence operations, which increasingly resorted to terrorism.²⁴³ This development has been attributed to Prince Anatoly Lieven, head of the BRT in Latvia and affiliated to the Russian Section of the EIA, who in 1931 decided to restructure the BRT’s counterintelligence apparatus toward a terrorist direction, with Zile at the helm. To that end, Zile and his fellow combatants established an underground explosives workshop in Riga to facilitate terror attacks against Soviet targets. For example, in 1931, they planted a bomb on a Soviet train, but the explosives were spotted and the attack thwarted.²⁴⁴

It seems hard to conceive that Ilyin was not privy to Zile’s subversive activities and may have even supported them, given that Ilyin himself had done intelligence work for the BRT and the ROVS in the past under the cover of *Beloe Delo*; and he must have been fully aware of the eminent role

²³⁸ O. V. Lisitsa, “Arkhiv I.A. Il’ina v MGU: Istoriia peredachi arkhiva,” *Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il’ina (1883–1954)*, <http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/arhiv-v-mgu/arhiv-v-mgu.html>.

²³⁹ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 123.

²⁴⁰ M. S. Soloiyev, “Dol’she goda my zhdal’ ne mozhem,” 35, quoted in Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 128.

²⁴¹ Y. Abyzova and T. Feigman, “Nepriyati sud nad pravovedom N. Iakobi,” in *Baltiiskii arkhiv*, vol. 4 (Riga: Daugava, 1999), 104–40, <http://www.russkije.lv/ru/pub/read/jacoby-p/>.

²⁴² Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 128.

²⁴³ “Roman Zile,” *Latvijas Krievu kultūras mantojuma institūts*, <http://www.russkije.lv/ru/lib/read/r-zile.html>.

²⁴⁴ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 127.

that Lieven played given that they both belonged to the inner circle of the Russian Section of the EIA. The Latvian authorities were aware of Ilyin's appearances from early on. According to Bazanov "in 1932, I. A. Ilyin arrived in Riga once again with the intention of giving a lecture on Stalin, which the Latvian authorities prohibited."²⁴⁵ Shortly thereafter, in October 1932, Zile was expelled from Latvia when Soviet-Latvian trade negotiations were underway, and Soviet intelligence leaked details about Zile's terrorist ventures to the liberal émigré press. Zile temporarily found refuge in Germany; however, in September 1933, he was granted permission to return to Latvia, where he continued to organize lecture tours for Ilyin.²⁴⁶

Anti-communist and pro-Nazi activities in Germany (1927–1933)

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Ilyin markedly deepened his ties to German anti-communist agitators from business, political, and church circles, many of whom sympathized with the Nazis. In that period, Ilyin began to frequently contribute articles to the German press, for the most part fiercely anti-communist and religious propaganda. Most notably, from 1928 to 1932, Ilyin wrote about twenty articles for the Berlin newspaper, *Tag*, carrying titles such as "What Is Cultural Bolshevism" and "Bolshevism as Psychosis."²⁴⁷ Furthermore, a few articles for the *Munich Latest News* (*Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*) are recorded, including "The Coming Russia: Cooperation with Germany—The Great Process of Clarification" and one article in memory of Pyotr Wrangel.²⁴⁸

Ilyin also provided anticommunist propaganda to various business associations. In 1928, he delivered a speech on the "Expropriation in Russia and Its Significance for the World" to the German Association of Home and Estate Owners (*Zentralverband Deutscher Haus- und Grundbesitzervereine*), printed as a chapter in the association's annual report.²⁴⁹ In 1928, he wrote an article titled "World Crisis of Property Consciousness" for the *German*

²⁴⁵ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 125.

²⁴⁶ Latvijas Krievu kultūras mantojuma institūts, "Roman Zile."

²⁴⁷ Ivan Ilyin, "Was ist Kulturbolschewismus," *Tag*, Berlin, June 26, 1931, Vol 31, Issue 152, 1–2; Ivan Ilyin, "Bolschewismus als Psychose," *Tag*, Berlin, January 17, 1932, Issue 15, 1–2.

²⁴⁸ Ivan Ilyin, "Das kommende Rußland: Zusammenarbeit mit Deutschland - Der große Klärungsprozeß," *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Munich, December 7, 1926, No. 338; Ivan Ilyin "General Peter von Wrangell. Seinem Gedenken," *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Munich, May 2, 1928, No. 120. See "I.A. Il'in. 'Moi stat'i v nemetskikh gazetakh. №1,'" Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-moi-stati-v-nemeckih-gazetah-no1.

²⁴⁹ Ivan Ilyin and Josef Humar, *Bericht über den 49. ordentl. Zentralverbandstag in Görlitz (öffentliche Tagung): mit Referaten Iwan Iljin: die Enteignung in Rußland und ihre Bedeutung für die Welt; Josef Humar: die Forderungen des deutschen Hausbesitzes an den neuen Reichstag* (Berlin: Zentralverband Deutscher Haus- und Grundbesitzervereine, 1928).

Mining Newspaper (Deutsche Bergwerkszeitung).²⁵⁰ In 1929, he published "Communism or Private Property" with the association's publishing house.²⁵¹ From 1930 to 1932, he contributed to the weekly of the Brandenburg section of the Agrarian Federation (*Landbund*), for which he also held lectures, for example, about "The Sufferings of the Russian Peasant."²⁵² In February 1930, Ilyin gave a lecture to the Reich Economic Council (*Reichswirtschaftsrat*) on "The Decay of the Family Order in Russia."²⁵³ Throughout 1931, he was in touch with the Federation of German Employer Associations (*Vereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände e.V.*), which printed a review of Ilyin's "Communism or Private Property."²⁵⁴ Some of these contacts carried into the Nazi period.

At the same time, church dignitaries started to knock on Ilyin's door. In 1930, the head of the Catholic Apprentice Federation inquired whether Ilyin could do a series of lectures as an "antidote...against communist influences."²⁵⁵ In 1931, he was invited by the Parochial Association of Protestant Congregations (*Parochialverband Evangelischer Kirchengemeinden*) in Berlin to give a speech about "The Intellectual Foundations of Bolshevism."²⁵⁶ In early 1932, the president of the State Ecclesiastical Office of Hesse (*Landeskirchenamt*) contacted Ilyin to organize a personal meeting with the German Protestant pastor Otto Eckert (1891–1940) and invited him to lecture at an "Eckert evening."²⁵⁷

An ardent Nazi and NSDAP member, Eckert supported violent measures against communists and social democrats in the spring of 1933 and became a member of the Reich leadership of the German Christians. However, Ilyin was ill at that time and was apparently unable to accommodate the requests. Nonetheless, he sent over "valuable material" to the Hesse Ecclesiastical Office, which notified Ilyin in April 1930 that the Church Councilor, a certain D. Eisenberg, had written a review on Ilyin's *The Unleashing of the Underworld*, which would be published in the Office's gazette. D. Eisenberg was also a representative of the Protestant Press Association for Hesse-Kassel, who requested to meet Ilyin personally in February 1932.²⁵⁸ In April 1932, Ilyin received an invitation from the Protestant Parish Church Council in Berlin-Tegel to speak at a parish

²⁵⁰ Ivan Ilyin, "Weltkrise der Eigentumsbewußtsein," *Deutsche Bergwerkszeitung* Vol. 29, Düsseldorf, August 14, 1928.

²⁵¹ Ivan Ilyin, *Kommunismus Oder Privateigentum? Eine Problemstellung* (Berlin: Verlagsanstalt d. Deutschen Hausbesitzes, 1929).

²⁵² Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 48–50; Ivan Ilyin, "Die Leiden des russischen Bauern: Vortrag des ehemaligen russischen Professors Dr. Iljin auf der Vertreterversammlung des Brandenburgischen Jung-Landbundes am 22. Januar 1930," *Brandenburgische Landbund: Wochenzeitung*, Berlin, January 2, 1930, No. 4, 1–2.

²⁵³ Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 401.

²⁵⁴ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 35.

²⁵⁵ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 19.

²⁵⁶ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 34.

²⁵⁷ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 44, 46.

²⁵⁸ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 47.

meeting about the “disintegrating effects of Bolshevism, particularly on marriage and family.”²⁵⁹

As of 1930, Ilyin had arrived at the highest echelons of German politics. That year, he gave a series of incendiary speeches which catapulted him into the limelight and led to manifold new contacts and business opportunities. However, they caused some discontent at the German Foreign Office, possibly due to pressure from its Soviet counterpart. A series of letters from the German Foreign Office to the DGSO indicate that Ilyin’s political rallies “contradict[ed] the policy of the imperial government towards the Soviet Union” and asked the DGSO to reprimand Ilyin and his RSI colleague, the economist Boris Davydovich Brutskus (1874–1938).²⁶⁰

In those letters, the Foreign Office took note of several events, starting with a mass rally organized by the Luther Ring (*Lutherring*) on February 2, 1930, where Ilyin appeared as a speaker “to call for the joint struggle of the entire Christian world against Bolshevism.”²⁶¹ The Luther Ring was founded by the German Lutheran pastor Bruno Doehring (1879–1961), who at that time was affiliated with the German National People’s Party, which had co-operated with the Nazi Party since 1929. The audience of the February rally at Berlin’s Wintergarten included, notably, members of the Hohenzollern family. The speech, “The Persecution of Christians in the Soviet State,” was printed in a special issue of the bimonthly *Lutherring* in February.²⁶²

In addition, the Foreign Office referred to two more events, which Tsygankov described as follows:

On March 14, 1930, at a meeting of the Gentlemen’s Club (*Herrenclub*), in the presence of almost 80 notable people from the circles of German politics, economy and the church, measures were discussed to coordinate efforts against Bolshevism. Participants included the future Imperial Chancellors Franz von Papen (Center Party) and Kurt von Schleicher (Department of Defense); retired Minister of the Interior von Keidel (German National people’s party); the industrialists Abraham

²⁵⁹ Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Ofitsial’nye pis'ma,” 55.

²⁶⁰ “Ivan Iljin - Archivmaterialien aus dem Politischen Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes der Bundesrepublik Deutschlands,” Ivan Iljin (internet project), https://web.archive.org/web/20221031112639/http://iljinru.tsygankov.ru/german/archiv/paaa_d.html.

²⁶¹ Ivan Iljin (internet project), “Ivan Iljin - Archivmaterialien.”

²⁶² “I.A. Il’in. Die Religionsverfolgung Im Sowjetstaate’ (‘Religioznye presledovaniia v Sovetskom gosudarstve’). Rech’ 23 fevralia 1930 g., Berlin. Spetsial’nyi vypusk gazety ‘Lutherring’ (‘Kol’tso Liutera’),” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-die-religionsverfolgung-im-sowjetstaate-religioznye-presledovaniya-v-sovetskom-gosudarstve-rech-23-fevralya-1930-g-berlin-specialnyy-vypusk-gazety-lutherring-kolco-lyutera.

Frowein, Georg Solmssen, Hans von Raumer; from church circles - Berlin Bishop Christian Schreiber and superintendent Otto Dibelius. Ilyin delivered a keynote speech, "The Communist World Attack," after which a general discussion began, which resulted in the formation of a preparatory Action Committee. In May 1930, this Committee decided to create two anti-Bolshevik organizations - the Union for the Protection of European Culture (headed by Werner von Alvensleben from the leaders of the Gentlemen's Club) and European Action (headed by the chairman of the central committee of German Catholics, Prince Alois zu Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg).²⁶³

Little is known about Ilyin's involvement in those organizations. In February 1931, Ilyin was contacted by the politician and businessman Werner von Alvensleben (1875–1947) of the Union for the Protection of European Culture (*Deutscher Bund zum Schutz der abendländischen Kultur*, DBSAK), founded in June 1930. During WWI, Alvensleben had been a personal aide-de-camp of Emperor Wilhelm II to Pavlo Skoropadskiy (1873–1945), the Hetman of Ukraine. Alvensleben was part of the inner circle around the future German Reich Defense Minister and Reich Chancellor, General Kurt von Schleicher. He had been a go-between for von Schleicher and Adolf Hitler before the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, after which Alvensleben was demoted. Alvensleben wrote to Ilyin on February 24, 1931, that he had forwarded Ilyin's book *World at the Abyss* to Prelate Ludwig Kaas of the Center Party, so that the latter "draw the necessary foreign policy consequences against the murderers in Moscow."²⁶⁴ It was none other than Kaas who swore the Center Party to agree to the Enabling Act of March 5, 1933, which gave Hitler dictatorial powers. Kaas then went to Rome and was involved in drawing up the concordat of the German Reich with the Holy See.

On February 26, 1931, another representative of the DBSAK contacted Ilyin to call upon his expertise about a certain Lenin quote that had become the center of a controversy in the press.²⁶⁵ Starting in December 1931, Ilyin received similar requests about specific Lenin quotes by the *Editorial of the Grail: Literary Monthly* (*Schriftleitung des Gral: Literarische Monatsschrift*), signed by a certain Baron W. von Blumenthal.²⁶⁶ In another letter from 1932, Blumenthal states that he had "received the manuscript [not identified] and immediately handed it over to the press"; furthermore "we also intend to make the manuscript available to the 'Germania' [fraternity]."²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Iwan Iljin (internet project), "Iwan Iljin - Archivmaterialien."

²⁶⁴ "Pis'mo Alvensleben, von Il'inu I. A. Na Blanke 'Deutsche Bund Zum Schutz Der Abendlandischen Kultur'," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-alvensleben-von-ilinu-i-a-na-blanke-deutsche-bund-zum-schutz-der-abendlandischen-kultur-nemeckiy-soyuz-zashchity-evropeyskoy-kultury.

²⁶⁵ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 29.

²⁶⁶ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 38–39.

²⁶⁷ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 42.

Presumably, the latter is the still-existing right-wing extremist fraternity of the same name, founded in 1919.

Hoetzsch, as patron of the RSI, came under pressure due to his protégés' anti-Soviet agitation at the institute, and in 1931, when confronted with realizing a new programmatic outline of the RSI, dropped out as the institute's executive vice president. According to Voigt:

Contrary to its own academic direction, the Russian Scientific Institute received a new orientation from a third party: "At the suggestion of a higher German Reich authority, the Russian Scientific Institute shall take on the task of collecting and compiling authentic material from Russian communist sources about the Bolshevization of Germany," it said in a piece of writing. "The guidelines of the communist headquarters in this matter as well as the party decisions, the resolutions of the Third International, the statements of individual leaders and especially the methods of Bolshevization must be determined and examined on the base of authentic sources."²⁶⁸

Hoetzsch, who frequently traveled to Russia throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, and was keen on maintaining contacts with Russian scientific circles, saw his aspirations thwarted by both sides: the political agitation of some RSI members and the sudden demand to focus on anticommunist espionage inside Germany.²⁶⁹ With Hoetzsch dropping out, the institute's fate was on the line. After 1932, the RSI's funding from the German government practically ceased, and with it the institute's activity.²⁷⁰

While the RSI went through this rough patch, Ilyin apparently kept the wolf from the door by writing contract work for the Interior Ministry. A batch of letters exist to Ilyin from a certain Dr. Max Sering, director of the German Research Institute for Agriculture and Settlements (*Deutsches Forschungsinstitut für Agrar- und Siedlungswesen*). In January 1932, Ilyin was pressured by Sering that he should hurry up with the analysis of the "material" that he had sent to the "Minister."²⁷¹ In follow-up messages, it becomes clear that Sering was an intermediary between Ilyin and the former Interior Minister Joseph Wirth (1879–1956), who had requested that Ilyin write a report on the "Directives of the Comintern for the Bolshevization of Germany."²⁷² In a message from March 1932, Sering mentions that "the Reich Ministry of the Interior is formally not able to support the Russian Scientific Institute, however, it is able to pay a writer's

²⁶⁸ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 277–278.

²⁶⁹ Voigt, "Otto Hoetzsch, Karl Stählin," 278.

²⁷⁰ Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil In Deutschland," 51, 53.

²⁷¹ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 45.

²⁷² Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 53.

fee.”²⁷³ Also the Reich Chancellery, then headed by Heinrich Brüning, thanked Ilyin for the material on the Comintern in May 1932.²⁷⁴

Eckart publishing house (1930–1934)

Another stream of revenue opened up through his contacts in Protestant pro-Nazi circles, when Ilyin began collaborating with the German Eckart publishing house (Eckart-Verlag, EV). The connection may have come through the Luther Ring, since EV republished the speech Ilyin had given at the organization’s 1930 mass rally as part of a brochure. Also, the name of Prince Shcherbatov appears early in the communication with EV. Apparently, EV sent a copy of Ilyin’s *World at the Abyss* to Adolf von Schwarzenberg “on behalf of his Serene Highness.”²⁷⁵

EV grew around a monthly periodical called *Eckart*, established in 1924, which during the interwar period was edited by August Hermann Hinderer, longtime president of the Protestant Journalist League (*Evangelischer Presseverband*) in Berlin.²⁷⁶ The historian Simon Unger-Alvi states that the *Eckart* was “a theological forum in which supporters and opponents of the Nazi movement came into direct contact,” that it “helped stabilize the Nazi regime,” and that its “authors perpetuated nationalist ideas in West Germany after 1945.”²⁷⁷

While in its early years the publishing house focused on Protestant literature, in the period between 1930 to 1934, EV commissioned decisively anti-Soviet titles, some of which Ilyin wrote. An undated, “strictly confidential” memorandum by Ilyin titled “On the further expansion of the work begun at Eckart’s publishing house,” indicates that Ilyin helped conceptualize this reorientation of EV towards anti-communist propaganda.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Ofitsial’nye pis’ma,” 51.

²⁷⁴ Both, Wirth and Brüning, left Germany after the Nazis’ seizure of power, and emigrated to Switzerland and the US respectively. Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Ofitsial’nye pis’ma,” 57.

²⁷⁵ “Pis’mo Schwarzenberg Adolf k Knyazyu Shcherbatovu (Furst Scherbatof),”

Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in,

https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-schwarzenberg-adolf-k-knyazyu-shcherbatovu-furst-scherbatof.

²⁷⁶ Simon Unger-Alvi, “Public Criticism and Private Consent: Protestant Journalism between Theology and Nazism, 1920–1960,” *Central European History* 53, No. 1 (March 2020): 94–119, 98.

²⁷⁷ Unger-Alvi, “Public Criticism and Private Consent,” 94.

²⁷⁸ “I.A. Il’in. Proekt Pamiatnoi Zapiski ‘Über Den Weiteren Ausbau Der Eckart-Verlag Begonnenen Arbeit’,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-proekt-pamyatnoy-zapiski-uber-den-weiteren-ausbau-der-eckart-verlag-begonnenen-arbeit-o-dalneyshem-rasshirenii-raboty-nachatoy-v-izdatelstve-ekarta.

Ilyin's communication with EV dates back to at least October 1930.²⁷⁹ That year, he contributed a chapter to the compendium *The Chronicle of the Plight of Russian Christianity*.²⁸⁰ This was followed by several full-length books, starting in 1931 with *The World at the Abyss: Politics, Economy and Culture in the Communist State and Against Godlessness*; followed by a brochure "The Poison, Thought and Nature of Bolshevism" in 1932, first published in Switzerland a year earlier; and finally, in 1932, *The Unleashing of the Underworld*, written in collaboration with Adolf Ehrt (1902–1975) for which Ilyin used the pseudonym "Julius Schweickert"—the name of his maternal grandfather.²⁸¹ Ilyin also gave several speeches at so-called "Eckart



A picture of Adolf Ehrt from 1931 from Ilyin's archive.
Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>

²⁷⁹ "Pis'ma ot berlinskogo izdatel'stva 'Eckart Verlag', dogovory s Il'inym I. A. na izdaniia ego knig," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-ot-berlinskogo-izdatel'stva-eckart-verlag-dogovory-s-ilinym-i-a-na-izdaniya-ego-knig.

²⁸⁰ Ivan Ilyin et al., *Das Notbuch der russischen Christenheit* (Berlin: Eckart-Verlag, 1930).

²⁸¹ Ivan Ilyin (ed.) et al., *Welt vor dem Abgrund: Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur im kommunistischen Staate* (Berlin: Eckart-Verlag 1931). Ilyin's chapter is available online: <https://archive.org/details/weltvordemabgrund.diearbeitsmethoden>; Ivan Ilyin, *Wider die Gottlosigkeit* (Berlin: Eckart-Verlag, 1931); Ivan Ilyin, *Gift, Geist und Wesen des Bolschewismus. Fortlaufende Abhandlungen über Wesen und Wirken des Bolschewismus* (Berlin: Eckart-Verlag, 1932); Adolf Ehrt and Julius Schweickert (Ivan Ilyin), *Die Entfesselung der Unterwelt* (Berlin: Eckart-Verlag, 1932). Ilyin's epilogue is available here: <http://www.nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-1-426.pdf>.

evenings" in 1932 and 1933, with titles such as "Principles for combating Bolshevism."²⁸²

The collaboration with Adolf Ehrhart, which started at the latest in 1931, proved to be consequential for Ilyin, particularly after the Nazis' seizure of power.²⁸³ Ehrhart was a German born in Russia, who from 1931 to 1933 headed the German Evangelical Church's Defense Agency Against the Marxist-Bolshevik Godless Movement (*Abwehrstelle der deutsch-evangelischen Kirche gegen die marxistisch-bolschewistische Gottlosenbewegung*) within the Protestant Journalist League.²⁸⁴ Ehrhart joined the NSDAP in 1931, and from 1933 to 1936, was the managing director of Eberhard Taubert's Antikomintern—a department in Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry which, albeit briefly, employed Ilyin.²⁸⁵

Antikomintern

According to Yuri Lodyzhensky, the Eckart-Verlag "was the nucleus from which the German Antikomintern emerged," at the very time that Ilyin was behind some of EV's key anti-Bolshevik publications—which situates Ilyin right at the genesis of the powerful Nazi organization.²⁸⁶ Short for Anticomunist International, the Antikomintern was founded in 1932 as the General Federation of German Anti-Communist Associations (*Gesamtverband Deutscher antikommunistischer Vereinigungen*) by Eberhard Taubert (1907–1976), an SA-*Sturmführer*, NSDAP member and close affiliate

²⁸² "1-331. I.A. Il'in. "Dritter Eckart-Abend" (Tretii vecher Ekkarta). - 20 l.," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-1-331.pdf>; "1-330. I.A. Il'in. "Eckart-Abende," Vechera Ekkarta. Rech' na pervom vechere. - 7 l.," Nauchniya biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-1-330.pdf>; "1-332. I.A. Il'in. "Vierter Eckart-Abend" ("Chetvertyi vecher Ekkarta"). Konspekt rechi. - 5 l.," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-1-332.pdf>; "I.A. Il'in. 'Leitsatze Zur Bekämpfung Des Bolschewismus. Von Prof. Dr. I. Iljin' (Printsipy bor'by s bol'shevizmom)," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-leitsatze-zur-bekampfung-des-bolschewismus-von-prof-dr-i-iljin-principy-borby-s-bolshevizmom.

²⁸³ There exists a picture of Ehrhart in Ilyin's archive dated to December, 1931 that says on the backside "Working with Ehrhart on 'Unleashing' (Entfesselung), December 1931," referring to their upcoming publication. See "3-65. Ert A. Fotografiya. 1931. - 1l.," Nauchnaya Biblioteka MGU, www.nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-3-065.pdf.

²⁸⁴ Christian Tilitzki, *Die deutsche Universitätsphilosophie in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich* (Volume 1 of 2) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 646.

²⁸⁵ Martin Finkenberger, "Antikomintern," in Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart - Organisationen, Institutionen, Bewegungen*, vol. 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter / Saur, 2012), 29.

²⁸⁶ Iurii Lodyzhenskii, *Ot Krasnogo Kresta k bor'be s Kommunisticheskim Internatsionalom* (Moscow: Airis-Press, 2007), 437.

of Joseph Goebbels.²⁸⁷ Its name was conceived as the antithesis to the Communist International (Comintern).

After the Nazis seized power, in October 1933, the Gesamtverband was incorporated into the newly founded Reich Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda; however, it maintained the form of an association as a disguise, with Taubert pulling the strings. Nicknamed “Dr. Anti,” Taubert quickly rose ranks to become one of the most important anti-communist and antisemitic Nazi propagandists in the Reich. The Antikomintern’s activities were rather broad. Bernd Engelmann states that Taubert’s initial responsibilities comprised “general domestic politics, opposing world views, church affairs, [and] bolshevism at home and abroad.”²⁸⁸

From 1933 to 1934, Eckart-Verlag came under the control of the Antikomintern, and the latter also absorbed the Russian Scientific Institute, with Ilyin aiding the effort. It should be noted that Ilyin introduced Adolf Ehrt to Yuri Lodyzhensky of the Entente Internationale Anticomuniste, which started a collaboration between the EIA and the Antikomintern.²⁸⁹ The Antikomintern also closely collaborated with the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question (*Institut zum Studium der Judenfrage*), founded in 1934 by Taubert, with the Central office for the Study of Freemasonry (*Zentralstelle zur Erforschung der Freimaurerei*), and the Reich Association of German Returnees from the Soviet Union (*Reichsverband der deutschen Rückkehrer aus der Sowjetunion*).²⁹⁰

When the Nazis came to power, EV’s director became Kurt Ihlenfeld (1901–1972), a longtime associate of the Protestant Journalist League (as was his colleague August Hinderer). However, in 1934, EV was dropped by the Antikomintern in favor of the newly founded publishing house Nibelungen-Verlag (NV), directed by Taubert.²⁹¹ This matches one of the letters from EV to Ilyin from August 1934, which says that all the remaining anti-Bolshevist literature will be sold to NV, which “in the future will handle this genre [anti-Bolshevism] in collaboration with the responsible departments [Antikomintern].”²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Finkenberger, “Antikomintern,” 28–29; Bernt Engelmann, *Das neue Schwarzbuch: Franz Josef Strauss* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1980), 166, <https://archive.org/details/dasneueschwarzbu0000enge/page/166/>.

²⁸⁸ Engelmann, *Das neue Schwarzbuch*, 166.

²⁸⁹ Lodyzhenskii, *Ot Krasnogo Kresta*, 437.

²⁹⁰ Michael Fahlbusch, Ingo Haar, and Alexander Pinwinkler (eds.), *Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Akteure, Netzwerke, Forschungsprogramme*, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 633; “Antikomintern (Gesamtverband deutscher antikommunistischer Vereinigungen) e. V.,” Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, accessed November 15, 2022, <http://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/4HX57RIOT7YWCTN7STB3VUXDWHU4CG7R>.

²⁹¹ Klaus Körner, “Eberhard Taubert und der Nibelungen-Verlag,” *Berlinische Monatsschrift*, No. 12 (1997), 45, <https://berlingeschichte.de/bms/bmstxt97/9712proh.htm>.

²⁹² Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, “Pis'ma ot berlinskogo izdatel'stva 'Eckart Verlag'.”

NV published a mix of anti-Soviet, antisemitic, and religious propaganda, often resorting to accounts of Soviet dissidents, and became an extremely important propaganda vehicle during the Nazi era. NV continued to work with the Nazi successor to the Russian Scientific Institute and with Taubert's antisemitic Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question. Ilyin published just one book with NV, *Against Godlessness* in 1934, which had already been published by Eckart-Verlag in 1931.²⁹³

Welcoming the Nazis

Ilyin certainly welcomed the arrival of Nazism in Germany. For example, on May 17, 1933, he published an article in *Vozrozhdenie* praising Hitler and the Nazis:

...I categorically refuse to assess the events of the last three months in Germany from the point of view of German Jews.... What is happening in Germany is a huge political and social upheaval.... What did Hitler do? He stopped the process of Bolshevization in Germany and thereby rendered the greatest service to the whole of Europe.... The liberal-democratic hypnosis of non-resistance was thrown off. While Mussolini is leading Italy, and Hitler is leading Germany, European culture is given a respite....²⁹⁴

Ilyin's enthusiasm for the Nazi regime reverberated throughout his articles that appeared in the German press in 1933. From January to March 1933, he published a long article, "Crisis of Socialism," spread over three issues in the newly founded Nazi journal *Germany's Renewal* (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*) in Munich.²⁹⁵ In April 1933, Ilyin published the article "New Struggle and New Work" in the Nazi bimonthly *Liga Notebook* (*Liga-Heft*), the organ of the League for the Defense of Bolshevism (*Liga zur Abwehr des Bolschewismus e.V.*).²⁹⁶ To the July/August edition of *Eckart: Magazine for Protestant Spiritual Culture*, he contributed an article titled "Expectation and Purification—On Russian Emigration."²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Ivan Ilyin, *Wider die Gottlosigkeit: die Christenverfolgung im Sowjetstaate, der Sinn der Gottlosigkeit, der Bund der Gottlosen* (Berlin: Nibelungen-Verlag, 1934).

²⁹⁴ Ivan Ilyin, "Natsional-Sotsializm. Novyy Dukh," *Vozrozhdenie*, May 17, 1933, http://www.odinblago.ru/filosofiya/ilin/ilin_i_nacional_sociali.

²⁹⁵ Ivan Ilyin, "Krise des Sozialismus I," *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, Munich, January 1933, Issue 1, 20–27; Ivan Ilyin, "Krise des Sozialismus II," *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, Munich, February 1933, Issue 2, 65–71; Ivan Ilyin, "Krise des Sozialismus III," *Deutschlands Erneuerung*, Munich, March 1933, Issue 3, 141–147.

²⁹⁶ Ivan Ilyin, "Neuer Kampf und Neues Werk," in *Liga Heft: Organ der Liga zur Abwehr des Bolschewismus e.V.* (Berlin: Liga-Verlag, April 1, 1933), Special Issue, 14–15.

²⁹⁷ Ivan Ilyin, "Erwartung und Läuterung. Zur russischen Emigration," *Eckart: Blätter für evangelische Geisteskultur*, Berlin, July/August 1933, Vol. 6, Issue 7/8, 355–358.

As of 1933, Ilyin was a member of several organizations collaborating with the Nazis. Ilyin was affiliated with the Russian-German Club (*Russisch-Deutscher Klub*), for which he held at least four speeches throughout 1933.²⁹⁸ Little is known about the Club, however, it must have played a considerable role among far-right Russian émigrés in Germany.²⁹⁹ In an introductory speech on March 8, 1933, Ilyin called the Club “the oldest and toughest anti-Bolshevik cell in Germany.” He stressed that although the Club had a long hiatus, it was time to “renew the work” now that “a powerful anti-Bolshevik national movement has emerged in Germany, led by Hitler and organized by Göring, which clearly sees the danger signaled by us, and fights it with determination and courage.”

He added that the Club members were “willing to share their insights, and, if desired, readily put [their] advise at the disposal of the leaders of that movement.”³⁰⁰ Also, Ilyin’s old benefactor, Prince Shcherbatov held a speech at the Russian-German Club that year, as did Adolf Ehrh. Furthermore, Ilyin became a member of the Nazi-aligned Committee of the United Russian National Organizations (*Komitee der Vereinten Russischen Nationalen Organisationen*), founded on May 2, 1933, alongside Alexei von Lampe and Sergei Botkin. According to von Lampe’s biographer, Laura Sophie Ritter, “This demonstrates that even after the onset of Nazi rule, a small circle of already well-known individuals represented the interests of the emigrants to the outside world.”³⁰¹

Director of the Russian Scientific Institute (1933–1934)

²⁹⁸ “I.A. Il'in. “Einleitendes Wort (Vstupitel'noe slovo). Vystuplenie v Russko-Nemetskom Klube,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-einleitendes-wort-vstupitelnoe-slovo-vystuplenie-v-russko-nemetskom-klube; “Lektsiya ‘Ueber Die Richtlinien Der Komintern Zur Bolschewisierung Deutschlands,’” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-lektsiya-ueber-die-richtlinien-der-komintern-zur-bolschewisierung-deutschlands-o-direktivah-kominterna-po-bolshevizacii-germanii; “I.A. Il'in. Konspekt Doklada Shcherbakova 31 Maia 1933 g. v Russko-Germanskome Klube,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-konspekt-doklada-shcherbakova-31-maya-1933-g-v-russko-germanskome-klube; “I.A. Il'in. ‘Rech' na doklade Erta' v Russko-Nemetskom Klube,’” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-rech-na-doklade-erta-v-russko-nemetskom-klube.

²⁹⁹ Traces to a “Russisch-Deutscher Klub” in Dresden go back to 1921. See: Schlögel (ed.), *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 82. The name of the Club appears in Sergei Botkin’s papers at the Hoover Institution. See: “Register of the Sergei Dmitrievich Botkin Papers,” Hoover Institution Library and Archives, 1997, http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/hoover/reg_032.pdf.

³⁰⁰ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, “I.A. Il'in. ‘Einleitendes Wort.’”

³⁰¹ Ritter, *Schreiben für die weisse Sache*, 310.

In 1933, Ilyin took on an active role in bringing the Russian Scientific Institute under the control of the Nazis, when he briefly became its director. As a first step, the former Russian Colonel Armin von Reyher and Maximilian von Hamm were commissioned to review the institute by the Prussian Ministry of Culture, which was in charge of the RSI at the time.³⁰² According to Peter, "This act meant in effect an expropriation of the institute and with it of the Russian colony in Berlin, for its most valuable possession, the library, whose holdings had come largely from donations by the emigrants, was transferred to the legal entity of the association."³⁰³

Ilyin took over the leadership of the RSI after "Semyon Frank was forced to leave his position at the beginning of the summer of 1933 due to his Jewish origin."³⁰⁴ Peter stated that:

According to A. I. Ugrimov's letter to Professor Max Zering, Reyer acted according to the plan developed by Ilyin, when he removed Jews from the institute and created an association as a new representative office, of which Ilyin became vice-president. When the institute was transferred in October 1933 to the Reich Ministry of Propaganda and Adolf Ehrh began to lead it, only A. A. Bogolepov and V. P. Poletika were retained as its employees, along with Ilyin.³⁰⁵

This indicates that despite his ostentatious refusal of antisemitism, Ilyin did not hesitate to profit from the RSI's antisemitic purge. Solovyeva quotes a former colleague of Ilyin's as saying that "during the time of his rule [he] achieved to fire a part of his past colleagues, among whom was Yasinski, [who] ended up in extreme poverty and died soon."³⁰⁶

Under the supervision of Adolf Ehrh, Ilyin helped transfer the RSI from the Prussian Ministry of Culture and Science to the Propaganda Ministry, a process which was completed by the spring of 1934. Renamed to Association for the Maintenance of the Russian Scientific Institute in Berlin (*Verein zur Pflege des Russischen Wissenschaftlichen Instituts in Berlin e.V.*) on November 16, 1933, the RSI became an important component of the Antikomintern department within the Propaganda Ministry.³⁰⁷

In late June/early July 1933, Ilyin sent a proposal to the Prussian Ministry for Science Art and Public Education to establish a college to teach about "the erroneous doctrine of modern communism, its origin and its

³⁰² Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil In Deutschland," 53–54.

³⁰³ Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil In Deutschland," 55.

³⁰⁴ Peter, "Ivan Il'in i fashizm."

³⁰⁵ Peter, "Ivan Il'in i fashizm."

³⁰⁶ Solovyeva, "Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad," 46, citing S. Mihalchenko and E. Tkachenko, "Russkii nauchnyi institut v Berline v memuarah i perepiske russkoi emigratsii," *Vestnik BGU*, 2017, Vol. 4, No. 34.

³⁰⁷ Peter, "Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil," 55.

overcoming.”³⁰⁸ This was followed by an RSI report at the end of July, “The Famine in Soviet Russia as a Consequence of the Communist Agrarian Policy.”³⁰⁹

According to Ilyin’s own statements, already between April and July 1933, “the secret police [Gestapo] started to put pressure on him,” and he was prompted to refrain from political agitation.³¹⁰ Subsequently, Ilyin grew increasingly paranoid and became wary of what he wrote in letters for fear that they might be intercepted. Upon the completion of the transfer of the RSI to Antikomintern’s control in the summer of 1934, Ilyin, together with all of his Russian colleagues, was dismissed. Ilyin wrote:

In the beginning of July, I was fired, together with all my fellow countrymen, from the place which I attended for 12 years. Fired for being Russian. It is a big blow through and through, and I experience it quite responsibly, though it is burdensome. Financially, I will, probably, be able to make ends meet for a few months; but spiritually and patriotically, this is a heavy experience, a complete disaster.³¹¹

It should be noted that Ilyin was let go from the RSI just after the Night of the Long Knives (June 30 to July 2, 1934), when Hitler demanded the killing of hundreds of top Nazis and the demotion of many more whom he saw as potential competition. It could well be that Ilyin’s suspension was collateral of the purge; however, there are no indications that he was specifically targeted. The RSI continued to exist until 1939 under the name Institute for Scientific Research of the Soviet Union (*Institut zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung der Sowjetunion e. V.*); however, details about its activities are unknown, as is the fate of its valuable repository.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Ivan Ilyin, “Prospekt eines Kollegs über ‘Die Irrlehre des modernen Kommunismus, ihr Ursprung und ihre Ueberwindung,’” Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, I HA, Re 76Vc: Preußisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung, Sekt. 2, Tit. XXIII, Lit. A – No. 134: Das Russische Wissenschaftliche Institut in Berlin, Fol. 238–240.

³⁰⁹ “Lektsiia ‘Der Hungersnot in Sowjetrussland Als Folge Der Kommunistischen Landwirtschaftspolitik. Eine Diagnose,’” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-statya-der-hungersnot-in-sowjetrussland-als-folge-der-kommunistischen-landwirtschaftspolitik-eine-diagnose-golod-v-sovetskoy-rossii-kak-sledstvie-kommunisticheskoy-politiki-v-selskom-hozyaystve-diagnostika.

³¹⁰ Solovyeva, “Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad,” 49.

³¹¹ Solovyeva, “Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad,” 49.

³¹² “Verein zur Pflege des Russischen Wissenschaftlichen Institutes e. V., Berlin (Institut zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung der Sowjetunion e. V.).- Betriebsmittel, Haushalt, Rechnungsprüfungen,” Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/ZHARG5NPVX3V54KQ3IGSRXITJEL2DMPI>; Peter, “Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil In Deutschland,” 56.

After Ilyin lost his job at the RSI, he had to find other sources of income. From that point onward, he notably intensified his contacts with church and business circles and increasingly called upon his networks abroad. He limited his German lecture activities to local church congregations and business associations. Despite the 1934 prompt to refrain from political agitation, he continued to publish under pseudonyms. For example, he contributed around 45 articles to the *Berliner Tageblatt* under the pseudonym "Karl von Brebisius" in 1936 and 1937. Under that name, he also published various articles for the *German Press-Correspondence* (*Deutsche Presse-Korrespondenz*).³¹³ However, between 1934 and 1938, his contributions to the German press were limited overall.

Despite his setbacks in that period, Ilyin remained in contact with figures in the upper Nazi echelon. For example, Ilyin was in touch with the German law scholar Hans (Karl Ernst Ludwig) Keller (1908–1970), chairman of the Nationalist International, an organization founded in Zurich in 1934 with the aim of rallying international support for the Nazi movement.

In 1935, Ilyin was invited to its London congress. However, the organizers declined Ilyin's offer to send a submission to be delivered in his name since he could not travel there in person.³¹⁴ Contact with Keller continued after Ilyin's exile to Switzerland in late 1938, when Ilyin was invited by the latter to contribute to a publication series of the Academy for the Rights of the People (*Akademie für die Rechte der Völker*), founded 1936 in Oslo and headquartered in Nazi Berlin. Keller asked Ilyin to write a few lines "about the order of peoples (*Völker-Ordnung*) demanded by the Academy" in which he "should specifically work out the Russian point of view."³¹⁵ According to historian Hans Werner Neulen, both institutions, the Nationalist International and the Academy, enjoyed the support of various Nazi organizations, including the Gestapo and Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry, until 1940.³¹⁶

³¹³ "I.A. Il'in. Materialy dlia knigi "Ich schaue ins Leben" (Ia vgliadyvaius' v zhizn'): zametki, gazetnye vyrezki, stat'i pod psevdonomim K. Brebizius. (Karl von Brebisius). Pis'mo "Deutsche Presse Korrespondenz" I.A. Il'inu ot 17.01.1938 s uvedomleniem o publikatsii ego rabot.," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-materialy-dlya-knigi-ich-schaue-ins-leben-ya-vglyadyvayus-v-zhizn-zametki-gazetnye-vyrezki-stati-pod-psevdonomim-k-brebizius-karl-von-brebisius-pismo-deutsche-presse-korrespondenz-i-a-ilinu-ot-17-01-1938-s-uvedomleniem-o-publikatsii-ego-rabot; "I.A. Il'in. Stat'ia 'Der Boden'. 'Pochva' (Podpisano psevdonomim I.A. Il'ina - Karl Fon Brebizius). Iz al'manakha 'germanskaya press-korrespondentsiya' ('DDK'), 23 Sentyabrya 1937 g.," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-statya-der-boden-pochva-podpisano-psevdonomim-i-a-ilina-karl-fon-brebizius-iz-almanaha-germanskaya-press-korrespondentsiya-ddk-23-sentyabrya-1937-g.

³¹⁴ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 76.

³¹⁵ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 138.

³¹⁶ During World War II, Keller was drafted into the Air Force as an interpreter. After the war, he was active in numerous clubs and societies and worked between 1952 and 1966 as a city councilor in Munich. Hans Werner Neulen, *Europa und das*

In terms of high-ranking Nazi contacts, Johann von Leers (1902–1965) stands out; an SS-member who was among the most important ideologues of the Third Reich. Seemingly on his own initiative, Ilyin sent a book to Leers in 1937. Leers returned the favor by forwarding Ilyin two of his own publications about the “criminality of Judaism,” in which he speculated that the leaders of the “roaming ‘Baal crooks’ are the true forerunners of the red commissars.”³¹⁷

Apparently, Ilyin also enjoyed the support of Axel von Freytagh-Loringhoven (1878–1942), NSDAP Reichstag deputy and Prussian State Councilor from 1925 to 1942. In March 1938, Ilyin was contacted by the journal *European Review* (*Europäische Revue*) on the recommendation of von Freytagh-Loringhoven, inquiring whether Ilyin was available for potential commissions. However, there is no evidence that a collaboration with the journal ever came to pass.³¹⁸

Activities abroad

While there were clear limits to his propaganda activities in Nazi Germany, Ilyin was still able to express his views in émigré publications abroad. He traveled around Europe, mainly for speaking engagements, most frequently visiting Latvia, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland. After 1933, Ilyin continued to write for the Parisian *Vozrozhdenie*, contributing about 60 articles between 1931 and 1936, while the newspaper’s editor was Y. F. Semyonov. In 1935, *Vozrozhdeniye* also published three of his short stories under the pseudonym “Pyotr Streshnev.”

After the Nazis’ seizure of power, Ilyin also continued to collaborate with his Swiss contacts, particularly with the Lodyzhensky brothers. In 1933, he wrote “The Spiritual Meaning of Our Work” for the Russian Christian Workers’ Movement’s *New Way* in Geneva.³¹⁹ In 1937, Ilyin reportedly traveled to Geneva to participate in an RTKD congress.³²⁰ That year he also wrote a *Companion of the Russian Christian Nationalist* for the RTKD (2nd edition 1938), which, however, does not cite Ilyin’s name as author.³²¹ Furthermore, in 1935, Ilyin published a long anti-Bolshevik tract in Switzerland under the pseudonym Dr. Alfred Normann, called *Bolshevik*

3. Reich. *Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939–45* (München: 1987), 23, 405.

³¹⁷ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, “Ofitsial'nye pis'ma,” 97.

³¹⁸ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, “Ofitsial'nye pis'ma,” 126.

³¹⁹ Ivan Ilyin, “Dukhovnyi smysl nashego dela,” *Novyi put'*, Geneva, January 1933, No. 11.

³²⁰ “Il'in I.A. S"yezd R. KH. D. v Zheneve. Fotografiia. 1937,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/ilin-i-a-sezd-r-h-d-v-zheneve-fotografiya-1937.

³²¹ Ivan Ilyin, *Sputnik russkogo khristianina-natsionalista* (Geneva: Izdanie Russkogo Trudovogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniia, 1938) (2nd edition), <https://nbmgu.ru/pdf/Default.aspx?filename=F47%2f47-1-506.pdf>; Ilyin, *O voine. Poriadok ili besporiadok*, 444.

Global Power Politics: The Plans of the Third International to Revolutionize the World, printed by Gotthelf-Verlag in Bern.³²²

Ilyin could also count on his connections among Whites in Yugoslavia (until 1929 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes). After his dismissal from the RSI, he traveled to Bela Crkva in October–November 1934, where he gave a speech at an assembly commemorating the fortieth day of the death of Alexander I of Yugoslavia, which was subsequently printed in the publication *In Blessed Memory of the Knight King Alexander I the Unifier* in Belgrade.³²³

A picture available from that trip shows Ilyin with his wife alongside the



Picture from Ilyin's trip to Yugoslavia in November 1934, where he held a lecture. Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>.

White Lieutenant General Boris Viktorovich Adamovich (1870–1936), director of the First Russian Cadet Corps, a White military formation established in 1920, most of whose members fought on the side of the Nazis in WWII.³²⁴ In 1937, Ilyin's book *The Path of Spiritual Renewal* was published

³²² Dr. Alfred Normann (Ivan Ilyin), *Bolschewistische Weltmachtpolitik. Die Plane der 3. Internationale zur Revolutionierung der Welt* (Bern: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1935).

³²³ "Ivan Ilyin. Rech' v sobranii v 40-y den' konchiny korolia v sbornike statei 'Svetloi Pamiati Korolia Vitiazia Aleksandra i Ob"edinitelia,'" Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-rech-v-sobranii-v-40-y-den-konchiny-korolya-v-sbornike-statey-svetloy-pamyati-korolya-vityazya-aleksandra-i-obedinitelya.

³²⁴ Nasledie russkogo filosofa I.A. Il'ina, "Okruzheniye: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh."

in Belgrade, based on a series of lectures he had given to auditoriums of Protestant pastors.³²⁵

Another frequent destination for Ilyin in the early Nazi period was Latvia, which he visited in 1934, 1935, and 1937. As mentioned before, Ilyin's trips to Latvia were largely facilitated by his close associate Roman Zile, who provided Ilyin with lecture opportunities in the name of the Russian Academic Society of Latvia.³²⁶ His first journey to Latvia after the Nazis' seizure of power took place in 1934, which incidentally or not, coincided with the Latvian coup d'état by Kārlis Ulmanis, who on the night of May 15–16, 1934, took power with the help of the army and units of the national guard. It is evident from pictures that Ilyin was in Latvia from May 15–20, where he posed in pictures with Zile, alongside the military personnel Pavel Petrovich Delle (1907–1998) and another unidentified Delle, looking rather jolly.³²⁷

A fierce monarchist and with close ties to the NTS, Pavel Delle voluntarily joined Nazi punitive units in 1941 and became the head of the SD's *Sonderkommando* in Gatchina.³²⁸ After WWII, Delle was never punished for his war crimes and found refuge in the US.

³²⁵ Ivan Ilyin, *Put' dukhovnogo obnoveniia* (Belgrade, 1937), referenced in Tsygankov, "Ivan Iljin."

³²⁶ Reviews of some of the lectures Ilyin held in Latvia are available in his archive. See "2-73. Gazetnye retsenzii na leksii prof. I.A. Il'ina v Rige (1931, 1935 i 1937). 7 zametok. - 10l.," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbgmu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-2-073.pdf>.

³²⁷ "Paul Peter Delle (1907–1998)," Find A Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/173821822/paul-peter-delle>; "Il'iny I.A. i N.N. na belom ozere pod rigoi s druz'iami. Fotografii," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/iliny-i-a-i-n-n-na-belom-ozere-pod-rigoy-s-druzyami-fotografii.

³²⁸ Marlene Laruelle et al., "The Gatchina Group," White Russians and the International Far Right (internet project), http://whiterussianshistory.org/the_gatchina_group.



Standing (left to right): Roman Zile, Georgy Klimov, Maykapar (not identified), Erna Arturovna, and Renata Rudzit. Sitting (left to right): Tina Zile, Berkholz (not identified), Helena Zile (née Rahr), Ivan Ilyin, Zhenya Delle. Early November 1935. Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>.

Other pictures from the 1934 trip to Latvia show Ilyin together with members of the Klimov family, famous for hosting literary events at their dacha in Koknese, close to Riga. A picture from Ilyin's visit to Latvia from the following year shows that a close-knit group had formed which included the Ilyins, Klimovs, Ziles, and Delles. It shows Zile and his wife Helena (née Rahr), Georgy Klimov, the wife of Pavel Delle, and several of their friends at Klimov's dacha.³²⁹ Ilyin traveled to Latvia once more in

³²⁹ Nasledie russkogo filosofa I.A. Il'ina, "Okruzhenie: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh."

February 1937, where he gave a lecture tour on "Pushkin's prophetic vocation," prepared for the Russian Academic Society.³³⁰ Although after that there are no more recorded visits by Ilyin to Latvia, his relation to Zile and the Klimovs would last until the end of his life.

NTS publications (1934–1938)

In the post-1933 period, between 1934 and 1938, Ilyin started to publish several pamphlets with the NTS, of which Roman Zile was a notable leading member. At that point, the organization was called the National Union of the New Generation (NSNP, 1931–1936), and in 1936, it was renamed once more to the National Labor Union of the New Generation (NTSNP, 1936–1943).

Starting in 1934, Ilyin published three pamphlets with the NSNP and the NTSNP, "the center of which was in Berlin, and branches in many countries of Europe and America, particularly in Bulgaria."³³¹ The texts were published by the NSNP/NTSNP publishing house *Za Rossiю* (For Russia). The first one, "Three Speeches on Russia" (1934), was published in Sofia. "The Creative Idea of Our Future—On the Foundations of a Spiritual Character—A Public Speech Delivered in 1934 in Riga, Berlin, Belgrade and Prague" (1937) was based on articles that had originally appeared in *Vozrozhdenie* and were published by *Za Rossiю* as an extended brochure (printing house of M. N. Minis).³³² "The Fundamentals of the Struggle for a National Russia" (1938), published in Narva (Estonia), was a longer version of a separate brochure from 1937, titled "Companion of the Russian Christian Nationalist," originally published by the RTKD.³³³

In the years that Ilyin supplied propaganda for the organization, it was headed by Victor Baidalakov (1900–1967), who served as chairman from 1934 to 1954. As noted before, by 1930 the NTS had taken on a largely pro-

³³⁰ "I.A. Il'in. 'Prorocheskoe prizvanie Pushkina'. Torzhestvennaia rech', proiznesennaia v Rige 27/9 fevralia 1937 g.," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, [https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-prorocheskoe-prizvanie-pushkina-torzhestvennaya-rech-proiznesennaya-v-rige-27-9-fevralia-1937-g](https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-prorocheskoe-prizvanie-pushkina-torzhestvennaya-rech-proiznesennaya-v-rige-27-9-fevralia-1937-g;); "I.A. Il'in. Rech' 'Pushkin i Rossiia,'" Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-rech-pushkin-i-rossiya.

³³¹ Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Rossiia. Russkie pisateli, literatura, teatr, muzyka* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1996), 635.

³³² Ivan Ilyin, *O Rossii. Tri rechi. 1926–1933* (Sofia: *Za Rossiю*, 1934); Ivan Ilyin, *Tvorcheskaia ideia nashego budushchego: Ob osnovakh dukhovnogo kharaktera: Publichnaia rech'*, proiznesennaia v 1934 g. v Rige, Berline, Belgrade i Prage (Berlin: Izdanie Natsional'no-Trudovogo Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia, General'noe predstavitel'stvo v Germanii, 1937).

³³³ Ivan Ilyin, *Osnovy bor'by za national'nuiu Rossiю* (Narva: Izdanie Natsional'no-Trudovogo Soiuz Novogo Pokoleniia, General'noe predstavitel'stvo v Germanii, 1938); Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *O voine. Poriadok ili besporiadok. Rodina i my* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1998), 444.

German and pro-Nazi stance, a direction which continued under Baidalakov. Under his leadership, the NTS started to use the word “solidarism” as a designation for its political ideology; and “Neither communism nor fascism, but national labor solidarity”³³⁴ became its rallying cry. That “national labor solidarity” was just a blurry disguise of Nazism became clear with proclamations, such as in March 1936, when Mikhail Georgievsky wrote in the organization’s mouthpiece *Za Novuiu Rossiiu*: “Even without having read his [Hitler’s] *Mein Kampf*, we had reached the same thought in our hearts.”³³⁵ Another article from that time went so far as to equate Nazism with solidarism: “nationalism and social truth.... The new movements bear different names, but their essence may best be expressed in our word: Solidarism.”³³⁶

Russian Brother Aid

In the period leading up to his second exile in Switzerland, Ilyin also kept afloat through the support of Protestant church circles in Germany. Among them was the Russian Brother Aid (*Russische Bruderhilfe*, RBA), founded by the Protestant White émigré priest Nikolai S. Orlov, and headquartered in Lemgo. Orlov came to lead a Cossack Choir in Germany, which was touring the country during the Third Reich, and after WWII, he had a second life in the US. Before Ilyin enjoyed the organization’s support, the



Ilyin (second from left) noted on the reverse side: “May 1–10, 1937. Lemgo. Conference of the Russian Brother Aid.” Source: <http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-FOTOALBOMY/fotoalbomy-okruzhenie.html>.

³³⁴ *Za Novuiu Rossiiu*, No. 2 (37), April 1935, quoted in Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration*, 119.

³³⁵ *Za Novuiu Rossiiu*, No. 46, March, 1936, quoted in Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration*, 119.

³³⁶ *Za Rodinu* (For the Motherland), No. 62, September, 1937, quoted in Dvinov, *Politics of the Russian Emigration*, 120.

RBA had collaborated closely with Semyon Frank, Ilyin's former colleague at the RSI, who made lecture trips to German villages from 1930 to 1932 under the auspices of the RBA.³³⁷

The RBA arranged public lectures for Ilyin in various German towns dealing with the persecution of the church in Russia and printed some of them as brochures. In 1936, the RBA published Ilyin's "What Has the Martyrdom of the Church in Soviet Russia to Say to the Churches of the Other World?" a lecture held before pastors in Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, and Berlin.³³⁸ In April–May 1937, Ilyin appeared at a congress organized by the RBA in Lemgo.³³⁹ In 1937–1938, he wrote the manuscript "About Christian Disobedience to Communist Rule," which notes that the publication was written for "superintendent [Kasimir] Ewerbeck in Lemgo," with whom Ilyin kept in touch until after the war.³⁴⁰

In 1937, Ilyin published "Christianity and Bolshevism. What Are the Origins of the Christian Persecutions of the 20th century? A Factual Word" with the help of the RBA.³⁴¹ In the same year, the RBA printed "The Attack on the Eastern Christian Church: A Lecture Delivered to the Pastors of the Düsseldorf District Congregation on Nov. 1, 1937."³⁴² Between 1936 and 1938, Ilyin also published various articles in the *Monthly Journal of the Russian Brother Aid* (*Monatsblatt der Russischen Bruderhilfe*).

Although clerical fascist tendencies had been present in Ilyin's work during the 1930s, in the RBA publications they became glaringly evident. According to Peter:

His fight against godlessness...increasingly lost any theological or scientific ground, for example when he

³³⁷ Alexander Tsygankov and Teresa Obolevich, "S. L. Frank in the Third Reich: Notes for a Biography," *Chelovek* 32, No. 1 (March 19, 2021), 114.

³³⁸ Ivan Ilyin, *Was hat das Martyrium der Kirche in Sowjet-Rußland den Kirchen der anderen Welt zu sagen?* (Neukirchen: Stursberg, 1936).

³³⁹ Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, "Okruzhenie: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh."

³⁴⁰ "I.A. Il'in. Lektsiia 3. 'Über Christliche Auflehnung Gegen Die Kommunistische Herrschaft' ('O khristianskom proteste protiv kommunisticheskogo gospodstva')," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-lektsiya-3-uber-christliche-auflehnung-gegen-die-kommunistische-herrschaft-o-hristianskom-proteste-protiv-kommunisticheskogo-gospodstva; "Pis'mo Il'ina I. A. Everbeku Kazimiru (Kasimir Ewerbeck) c obrashcheniem 'Herr Superintendent'," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in,

https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-ilina-i-a-everbeku-kazimiru-kasimir-ewerbeck-c-obrashcheniem-herr-superintendent.

³⁴¹ Ivan Ilyin, *Christentum und Bolschewismus: Woher die Christenverfolgungen des XX. Jahrhunderts? Ein sachliches Wort von Iwan Iljin mit dem Geleitwort von Pastor K. Ewerbeck* (Lemgo: Russische Bruderhilfe, 1937).

³⁴² Ivan Ilyin, *Der Angriff auf die christliche Ostkirche. Vortrag von Professor Dr. I. Iljin; mit einem Vorwort von Missions-Inspector [F.] Schneider, gehalten vor den Pfarrern der Kreisgemeinde Düsseldorf am 1. Nov. 1937* (Lemgo: Russische Bruderhilfe, 1937).

condemned the Bolshevik Communists as “Satan in human form” and declared the “satanic man” as a product of a development of nihilism since Voltaire, the French encyclopedists and Friedrich Nietzsche, the “teachers and prophets of Bolshevik Satanism.”³⁴³

In 1938, before Ilyin left Germany, he published only two other texts. An article in the aforementioned RBA journal, and *I Look to Life: A Book of Contemplation*, released in Berlin by the publisher Furche-Verlag.³⁴⁴ The latter was largely composed of articles previously published in the *Berliner Tageblatt*.

Expulsion from Germany (1938)

The year of his exile to Switzerland, 1938, started rather well for Ilyin, since he managed to get a spot as a guest lecturer at the University of Hamburg.³⁴⁵ But on February 2, 1938, he “received a gag order by the Secret State Police [Gestapo]...without naming a reason,” according to Ilyin’s affidavit from 1938. Therein he stated that he “had to acknowledge certain allusions that had been made from various sides...that put me [Ilyin] in connection with the suspicious content of a Russian-language diatribe that appeared anonymously in Berlin in 1934.”³⁴⁶ Which diatribe that could be is unclear.

There are varying accounts of why the Gestapo started to go after Ilyin. Yuri Lisitsa mentions that in that period, Ilyin strongly rallied against the Nazi-sympathizing Mladorossy movement, attached to Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, and led by Alexander Kazem-Bek, which caused the “suspicious discontent” of the Gestapo.³⁴⁷ Roulin mentions that, “under the false accusation of being a Freemason, an agent of the Bolsheviks, the Gestapo proscribed his writings and forbade him any activity.”³⁴⁸ According to Tsygankov, “In early 1938, the Gestapo confiscated Ilyin’s works and prohibited him to appear in public,” whereupon “Ilyin decided to move to Switzerland, but the Berlin police forbade him to leave the country.”³⁴⁹

But Ilyin’s trouble with the Nazi authorities did not stop after the Gestapo’s gag order. He also had drawn the wrath of Alfred Rosenberg toward him, since he was unwilling to propagandistically support the planned invasion

³⁴³ Peter, “Russischer Wissenschaftler im nachrevolutionären Exil In Deutschland,” 54, quoting Iwan Iljin, *Was hat das Martyrium der Kirche in Sowjetrussland*, 18–21.

³⁴⁴ Ivan Ilyin, *Ich schaue ins Leben: Ein Buch der Besinnung* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1938).

³⁴⁵ Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, “2-2. I. Il’in. Avtobiografiya. 1941.”

³⁴⁶ “2-1. I. Il’in. Zaiavlennii-biografiia. 1938, 12 maia. Berlin. (Iljin I. Eidestattliche Erklärung). - 8l.,” Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, www.nbmgu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-2-001.pdf.

³⁴⁷ Lisitsa, “Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ I. A. Il’ina v emigratsii,” 132.

³⁴⁸ Roulin, *Un Credo Anticomuniste*, 42.

³⁴⁹ Tsygankov, “Iwan Iljin.”

of Ukraine.³⁵⁰ The same issue arose when the German War Ministry showed an interest in harnessing the NTS in the upcoming Eastern campaign. According to M. V. Nazarov:

With the advisory participation of Ilyin in 1938, the NTS negotiated with representatives of the German War Ministry. (The initiative came from the Germans, the NTS used it to induce Germany to abandon the then developed racist policy in the East. As a result of this unsuccessful attempt, all known members of the NTS had to leave Germany soon to avoid arrest.)³⁵¹

In July 1938, the NTS (at the time NTSNP) dissolved voluntarily in order to evade control by the Nazi government, but continued its activities informally. Johannes Baur reported that in 1938 the NTSNP dissolved itself to avert coming under the control of Vasili Biskupsky (1878–1945), who served as the Gestapo's main Russian liaison.³⁵² However, three years later, several NTSNP adherents were able to return to Germany through the mediation by the Nazi-collaborationist publisher Vladimir Despotuli, and to resume their activities, since their services were required by Alfred Rosenberg's Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories and by the Propaganda Department of the Wehrmacht.

Exile in Switzerland (1938–1954)

On July 9, 1938, the same month as the NTSNP went temporarily underground, Ilyin and his wife managed to leave for Switzerland. Given the network that Ilyin had established there—most notably the Russian Christian Workers' Movement and the Russian Section of the EIA, as well as various business and church contacts—it seemed like a sound choice for a country of exile.

From his application for residence in Switzerland, it is evident that Ilyin was no stranger to the country. The forms showed that he had visited Switzerland over ten times between 1923 and 1938. In his application letter, he wrote that since his first stay in Switzerland in 1910 he loved the Swiss country and people.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Solovyeva, "Ivan Ilin and Russia Abroad," 51.

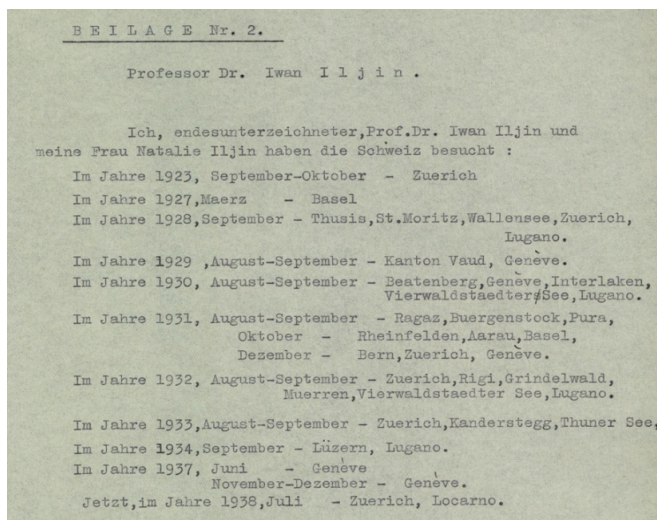
³⁵¹ Nazarov, "Russkii kolokol."

³⁵² Baur, *Die russische Kolonie in München 1900–1945*, 302. After Hitler seized power, Biskupsky led the Office for Russian Emigrants (Büro für russische Emigranten) in the Berlin district of Charlottenburg, which reported to the Gestapo. In May 1936 he was made head of the Trust Authority for Russian Refugees in Germany (Vertrauensstelle für russische Flüchtlinge in Deutschland), the main point of contact for Russian émigrés with German authorities.

³⁵³ Swiss Federal Archives, "Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers)," Dokument 4,35 (Attachment 2 to Ilyin's application for residence).

There are several indicators that Ilyin's old friend Roman Zile, member of the BRT, the ROVS, and the NTS, was instrumental in bringing Ilyin to Switzerland, who had left Latvia in order to avoid conscription. In a letter to Dr. Hans Trüb from 1946, Ilyin mentions that "When in 1938 I landed in Switzerland...my friend Roman Sihle [Zile] brought me here, to then simply vanish."³⁵⁴ This was, however, not before Zile briefly served as Ilyin's secretary in Switzerland, as noted in the memoirs of Gleb Rahr, whose half-sister Helena was married to Zile. Rahr states that in 1939 or 1940, Zile left for Nazi Germany and served in civil positions working for the railways of the Third Reich.³⁵⁵

That Zile was involved is also indicated by a recommendation letter from August 20, 1938 by Pastor Rudolf Grob to the Department of Immigration of the Zurich Police, which states: "Three weeks ago I received a visit from Prof. Dr. Ivan Ilyin...who had previously announced himself to me



Attachment 2 of to the Curriculum Vitae that Ivan Ilyin supplied alongside the application for residence in Switzerland in 1938. It lists the occasions that he had visited Switzerland in the past. Source: Ilyin's file at the Swiss Federal Archives.

through a friend, Prof. Zihla [Zile] in Riga." Grob mentioned that he knew Ilyin from "some of his writings," including a work in Eckart-Verlag, and was aware of the activities of the Russian Brother Aid which "sends gifts of love and bibles to the oppressed Christians in Russia and is supported by

³⁵⁴ "Pis'mo Il'ina I. A. doktoru Trub Hans," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-ilina-i-a-doktoru-trub-hans.

³⁵⁵ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 123.

the Confessing Church.”³⁵⁶ Grob was involved in the Swiss Nazi movement, who appeared “in 1940 as the first signatory of the ‘Petition of the Two Hundred’ (*Eingabe der Zweihundert*) [which] had called for a rapprochement with the Nazi regime,” according to the Swiss journalist Andreas Tobler.³⁵⁷ In a file from Ilyin’s dossier dated to 1942, Grob is described as “a German propagandist, known to be on the Right.”³⁵⁸

Amongst those whom Ilyin cited as a reference in his application for Swiss residence were also Prof. Dr. Theophil Spörri (1890–1974) and a certain Pastor W. Hoch from Zollikon. Between 1922 and 1956, Spörri taught Romance Philology at the University of Zurich and from 1932 onward served as Dean, and later as Rector, of the university. After its foundation in 1940, Spörri became the president of the Gotthard League (*Gotthardbund*), a militaristic-monarchical and Christian organization oriented on the Ancien Régime of Switzerland, which explicitly excluded Jews and Freemasons from joining.

In order to fund the move to Switzerland, Ilyin received help from his longtime supporter Sergei Rachmaninoff, who contributed the 4,000 Swiss francs necessary to take residence in the country.³⁵⁹ In Ilyin’s Swiss dossier, it is mentioned that the security deposit was delivered by Albert Riedweg, a representative of Rachmaninoff. According to Timothy Snyder:

Albert Riedweg was a right-wing lawyer whose brother Franz was the most prominent Swiss citizen in the Nazi extermination apparatus. Franz Riedweg married the daughter of the German minister of war and joined the Nazi SS. He took part in the German invasions of Poland, France, and the Soviet Union.³⁶⁰

It has also been mentioned that Ilyin’s move to Switzerland was assisted by Alexey Aleksandrovich Kvartirov (1911–1980), a former student of Ilyin in Berlin, and his sister Marina Deryugina (1916–2003), who was married to a ROCOR priest and appeared in the Orbit of the Russian Brother Aid.³⁶¹

³⁵⁶ Swiss Federal Archive, “Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers),” Document 4, 13 (Recommendation Letter of Rudolf Grob to the Zurich Police from August 20, 1938).

³⁵⁷ Andreas Tobler, “Exklusive Archivrecherche zu Iwan Iljin – Geheimakte von Putins Lieblingsphilosoph wird erstmals veröffentlicht,” *Tagesanzeiger*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/geheimakte-von-putins-liebblingsphilosoph-wird-erstmal-veroeffentlicht-238176255437>.

³⁵⁸ Swiss Federal Archives, “Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers),” Dokument 4, 19 (“In der Angelegenheit ILJIN Ivan genannte Personen,” March 12, 1942).

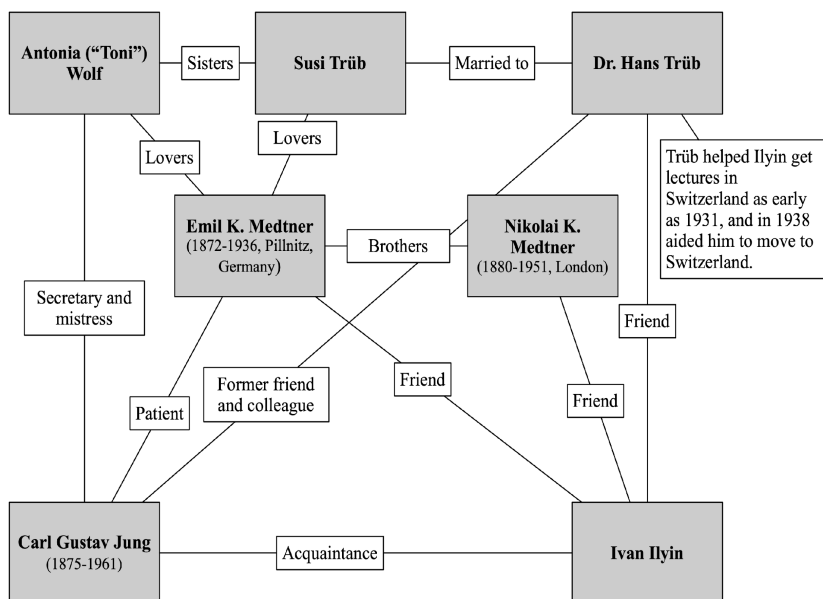
³⁵⁹ Lisitsa, “Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ I. A. Il’ina v emigratsii,” 133.

³⁶⁰ Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018). (electronic version).

³⁶¹ Lisitsa, “Arkhiv I. A. Il’ina v MGU.” Marina Aleksandrovna Deryugina was married to Mikhail Georgievich Deryugin. She appears on a picture together with Ilyin in April 1937 in the context of a conference of the Russian Brother Aid in Lemgo, Germany. See: Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il’ina, “Okruzheniye: I. A. i

Ilyin also received support from Dr. Hans Trüb, who helped him to open a savings account after he settled in Switzerland.³⁶² The two knew each other, at the latest, since 1931, when Trüb organized lectures for Ilyin at the Rotary Club in Switzerland.³⁶³

Table 1. Ilyin's contacts in Switzerland through the Medtner brothers



Trüb was a former friend and colleague of C. G. Jung and Emil Medtner, who most likely had established the contact between Trüb and Ilyin.³⁶⁴ Ljunggren mentions that Trüb was married to Susi Trüb, a temporary lover of Medtner. Susi Trüb was the sister of Antonia Wolf, the secretary and mistress of C. G. Jung, with whom Medtner also had an affair.³⁶⁵ Medtner himself had died two years prior to Ilyin's arrival after having moved voluntarily from Switzerland to Nazi Germany.

White Congress (July 1938)

The first few months, from July to November 1938, the Ilyins resided in Locarno Monti. There, immediately upon his arrival in July 1938, Ilyin convened a White congress that included a range of prominent White

N. N. Il'inykh." She, her husband and her brother became founding members of the Ilyin Society.

³⁶² Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Pis'mo Il'ina I. A. doktoru Trub Hans."

³⁶³ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 33.

³⁶⁴ Ljunggren, "Emiliy Metner," 412.

³⁶⁵ Ljunggren, "Emiliy Metner," 410, 412.

émigré dignitaries. The reason for the gathering was certainly the impending Nazi Eastern campaign and the question of how the Whites should position themselves in such a war. As evidenced by pictures, among the participants of the congress were a number of Ilyin's close affiliates and benefactors: Prince Nikolai B. Shcherbatov, Prince Sergei E. Trubetskoy, Nikolai A. Tsurikov, Pyotr Struve, Roman Zile, and Dr. Hans Trüb.³⁶⁶

The Bavaria-based Prince Shcherbatov had been a supporter of Ilyin at least since the 1926 Russian Foreign Congress. Just a year before the Locarno Monti congress, in March 1937, Shcherbatov had recommended Ilyin to the Munich publisher Kösel-Pustet for some translation work.³⁶⁷ The ROVS member Nikolai A. Tsurikov had previously contributed to Ilyin's *Russian Bell*, while Ilyin in turn had written several articles for Tsurikov's *Russia and Slavdom*.

Another prominent congress participant, Prince Sergey Evgenevich Trubetskoy (1890–1949), had left Russia on the same ship as Ilyin (as shown on a drawing by I. A. Matusevich), after being expelled for counterrevolutionary activity. Following the October Revolution, Trubetskoy participated in illegal meetings of the Union of Land Owners, the financial base of the counterrevolutionary Right Center, and in 1919 joined the equally anti-Bolshevik National Center. In the summer of 1922, he was arrested, but managed to leave for Germany, and finally settled in France. From 1922 to 1938, he collaborated with the ROVS and served as political adviser to the Generals Alexander Kutepov and Yevgeny Miller.

³⁶⁶ "I. A. i N. N. Il'iny na fotografiakh," *Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina* (1883–1954), <https://web.archive.org/web/20230523133937/http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-FOTOALBOMY/fotoalbomy-iljin-na-fotografijah.html>; *Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina* (1883–1954), "Okruzhenie: I. A. i N. N. Il'inykh"; "Opis' fotografii "Snimki uchastnikov s"ezda v Lokarno Monti (Shveitsariia) v iule 1938 g.", *sostavlennaia Zile R.M. - 11.*, "Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbgmu.ru/pdf/?filename=F47/47-3-157.pdf>.

³⁶⁷ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Ofitsial'nye pis'ma," 102.



Left: Prince Nikolai Shcherbatov (left) and Pyotr Struve (right). Right: Prince Sergei Trubetskoy (left) and Prince Nikolai Shcherbatov (right).
Source: <https://nbmgu.ru>.



The 1930 White congress resulted in a collection of fourteen resolutions, which were attributed to all congress participants, but were most likely penned by Ilyin.³⁶⁸ The resolutions made clear that “national Russia” was in favor of a “ripening of an internal coup” in the Soviet Union, although “without an external war and not as a result of it.”³⁶⁹ Another resolution, “On Ukraine,” was directed against Ukrainian separatist aspirations—very much in line with Ilyin’s belief that Ukraine was a “cell” of Russia’s “national body,” not far off the concept of the *Volkskörper* in Nazi Germany.³⁷⁰

One of the resolutions also discussed the past and future role of Russia’s royalty. It made clear that the Whites were ready to support “every Russian person who courageously led Russia to salvation from Bolshevism and from foreign invasion,” even if such a person was not a member of the Romanov family. Also, the issue of the split in the Russian Orthodox Church was addressed in one of the resolutions, which denounced the schism and the political machinations behind it as hurting the “Orthodox

³⁶⁸ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 278.

³⁶⁹ Quotes from Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya.” For the full text of the resolutions see: “Rezoliutsii Belogo S’ezda,” Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *Stat’i. Lektsii. Vystupleniia. Retsenzii* (1906–1954) (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 2001), 499 ff.

³⁷⁰ Snyder, *The Road To Unfreedom*; Udo Marquardt, “Putins Mastermind: Iwan Iljin,” *WDR 5 Scala - Aktuelle Kultur* (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, March 14, 2022), <https://web.archive.org/web/20220704114052/https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/audio/wdr5/wdr5-scala-aktuelle-kultur/audio-putins-mastermind-iwan-iljin-100.html>.

Church, its world significance and revival" and did not "recognize the correctness of any one side."

Another resolution denounced "Russian fascism" as "a sick course," and it was "also condemned to involve the Russian General Military Union (ROVS) in fascist groups or to subordinate it to the instructions of the foreign secret police as contrary to Russian national interest." The resolution spoke out against the undermining of the ROVS by the National Labor Union of a New Generation (NTSNP) that was deemed "harmful" to the White cause. Among other things, it decried the "division of emigration into generations," and the absence of a religious fundament in the NTSNP. However, it also had praise for the organization, describing it as "national and White" as well as having "a precious supply of people with a noble will, a pure heart and a formidable future."

In a separate resolution, the White congress addressed the rising tide of Nazi ideology among émigrés, which it denounced. A Nazi Russia would be a "new Bolshevism in reverse," undermining the monarchist principles and bringing "incalculable troubles" to Russia. The resolution also referred to the "Jewish issue," revealing the inherent antisemitism of the White congress. While blaming Nazi Germany for going after Jews and freemasons only for the purposes of power, the "Jewish issue" in a future Russia "should be resolved not by antisemitic pogroms, but by a new, strong, and independent government, thinking in a Christian, national, and stately way." It should be noted that the delimitation from German Nazism in the resolution certainly did not keep away some of the congress's participants from collaborating and liaising with Nazis in the years to come.

Just four months after the congress, another seminal event rattled the émigré monarchists. On October 12, 1938, Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich died in Paris and was buried in Coburg six days later in the presence of Russian and German nobility. Vasily Biskupsky also attended the funeral.³⁷¹ After Kirill's death, his only son Vladimir Kirillovich assumed the leadership of the Legitimist Movement and kept contact with the Mladorossy.³⁷² He chose to assume the title of "Grand Duke" rather than that of Emperor. Although no contact between Ilyin and Vladimir Kirillovich is known at that point, the two worked closely together after WWII to reconsolidate the White movement.

A few months after the White congress, the Ilyins moved to an apartment in Zollikon, a suburb of Zurich.³⁷³ Ilyin received his residency permit on December 1, 1938, but it was made explicit that he was "to engage in

³⁷¹ Schlögel, *Chronik russischen Lebens*, 484.

³⁷² Harald K. Graf, *Au Service de La Maison Impériale de Russie 1917 – 1941* (Cercle de La Marine Impériale Russe, 2015), Chapter 8, https://web.archive.org/web/20211201125709/https://aaomir-cmir.net/IMG/pdf/chapitre_8-2.pdf.

³⁷³ Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin."

scientific activity only.”³⁷⁴ Thus, in principle, he was only allowed to give lectures that were nonpolitical, for which a special permit was required from the Swiss Federal Immigrant Police (*Eidgenössische Fremdenpolizei*) each time, and the same rule applied to publications.³⁷⁵ While Ilyin complied with those restrictions when he had to, he found numerous ways to circumvent them, for example by taking part in private political gatherings and publishing under pseudonyms.

Still in 1938, he embarked on no less a project than writing a political blueprint for a future Russian state after the fall of the Soviet Union, “The foundations of the state structure of the future Russia,” which he presented at an exclusive White get-together from January 22 to 28, 1939, in Geneva. Among the 22 participants were important White figures, including the Lodyzhensky brothers, as well as members of the ROCOR leadership such as: Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky), Hierarch of the ROCOR; Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Bulgaria; and Archpriest Sergey Orlov, rector of a ROCOR church in Geneva.³⁷⁶

Ilyin’s connections to the ROCOR, particularly Metropolitan Anastasius Gribanovsky (1873–1965) who was elected as the First Hierarch of the ROCOR in 1936, lasted until Ilyin’s death. It is no secret that the ROCOR collaborated with the Nazis. Having garnered their favor, in February 1938, the Nazi authorities demanded that all the Russian clergy in the territories controlled by Germany be under ROCOR’s jurisdiction.³⁷⁷ Subsequently, Gribanovsky gave his blessings to the creation of the Russian Corps in September 1941, a formation of Russian officers under the control of the Nazi High Command and led by Boris Shteifon—a former contributor to Ilyin’s *Russian Bell*.

The Russian Corps was originally designated for military operations against the USSR; however, it was left in former Yugoslavia to fight against Communist insurgents. Metropolitan Anastasius subsequently had several meetings with General Andrey Vlasov and blessed the creation of the Russian Liberation Army (ROA). On November 18, 1944, Gribanovsky attended a solemn meeting in Berlin proclaiming the establishment of the ROA’s political arm, the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (KONR). With the Soviet army approaching, Metropolitan Anastasius and the staff of the Synod, with the assistance of General Vlasov, left for Bavaria.

Activities in Switzerland

Starting in 1939, Ilyin managed to keep afloat by writing a barrage of articles for Swiss newspapers, mostly under pseudonyms. It looks as if Ilyin

³⁷⁴ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 278.

³⁷⁵ Tsygankov, “Ivan Iljin.”

³⁷⁶ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 281.

³⁷⁷ Vladimir Moss, “ROCOR and the Nazis,” Vladimir Moss, December 23, 2019, <https://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/988/rocor-nazis/>.

had reached out to a number of different newspapers in the beginning,³⁷⁸ but he eventually became a regular contributor to the *Anzeiger Affoltern* from 1939 to 1946 (ca. 170 articles), signing his pieces mostly with “Peter Justus” or “PJ,” but also with other acronyms, such as “RK.” Under his RK alias, he wrote over forty articles for the *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten*. In the same period, he contributed about a dozen articles to *Berner Landbote*, mostly under the pseudonym Peter Justus. From 1942 until 1946, he published around eleven articles in the *Brugger Tagblatt* under the acronyms “RK” and “KP.”

The articles were almost entirely political in nature, thus violating Ilyin’s residency restrictions. As evident from Ilyin’s correspondence, most of the pieces were commissioned by a single customer: Samuel Haas (1889–1952), the founder and director of the Swiss press agency Center Press (Mittelpresse) from 1919 until 1947 (and of its successor, the Schweizer Politische Korrespondenz, until 1951).³⁷⁹ A right-wing publicist and Nazi-sympathizer, Haas was one of the co-founders of the Union for the People and the Homeland (Bund für Volk und Heimat) in 1933, one of the leading political organizations of the Swiss fascist movement (Frontenbewegung), which in 1936 had dissolved over a split when many of its members started to sympathize with German Nazism. Haas had championed the antidemocratic Initiative for the Total Revision of the Federal Constitution (*Initiative zur Totalrevision der Bundesverfassung*) in 1935, which sought to introduce a Swiss version of fascism, an endeavor which, however, flopped.³⁸⁰

Alongside Ilyin’s guarantor Pastor Rudolf Grob, in 1940 Haas promoted the Petition of the Two Hundred that sought an accommodation with the Nazis, and joined the Anti-Revolutionary Action in 1943.³⁸¹ According to Werner Rings, “When the patriotism of the left had long since proved to be one of the strongest pillars of national resistance, the director of the ‘Mittelpresse’ promoted to his friends and in the highest army circles the plan of an ‘anti-revolutionary action,’ for the establishment of secret, tightly organized employee cells in the large industrial plants of Switzerland, with the intention of ‘fighting the communist danger.’”³⁸²

³⁷⁸ Among them: *Der Wehnthaler*, *Willisauer Volksblatt*, *Unter Emmentaler*, *Engadiner Post*, *Luzerner Landbote*, *Aargauische Bauern und Bürgerzeitung*, *Oberländischer Volksblatt*, *Volkszeitung des Bezirkes Pfäffikon*, *Oltner Tagblatt*, *Albis Bote*, *Der Hausfreund*, *Bieler Tagblatt*, *Seeländer Bote*, *Oberländer Anzeiger*, *Anzeiger von Uster*, *Aargauer Volksblatt* etc.

³⁷⁹ Christoph Zürcher, “Haas, Samuel,” *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, August 9, 2006, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/014782/2006-08-09/>.

³⁸⁰ “L’Histoire c’est Moi: Kontext,” <http://www.archimob.ch/d/expo/guerre.html>.

³⁸¹ Zürcher, “Haas, Samuel”; Ruedi Brassel-Moser, “Eingabe der Zweihundert,” *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, May 7, 2010, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/017341/2010-05-07/>.

³⁸² Werner Rings, *Schweiz im Krieg 1933-1945: ein Bericht* (Zürich: Ex Libris, 1974), 120.

Ilyin and Haas's correspondence comprises around 275 letters, dating from 1939 to 1951.³⁸³ Ilyin made sure to sign his letters to Haas either with one of his pseudonyms or with a false initial or name, while speaking of the articles in progress in the third person (as if the sender was not the author of the articles). Both were well aware of these obfuscation maneuvers. For example, in a letter from May 2, 1943, Ilyin thanked Haas for his hospitality in signing as Peter;³⁸⁴ or Haas says in a letter to Ilyin from April 13, 1943, that he agrees with Ilyin's "working plans," while at the same time noting that "letters should best be sent via the old route" so that he does "not lose oversight."³⁸⁵

This arrangement was meant to guarantee that Ilyin was protected from potential repercussions by the Swiss authorities. At the same time, Haas could profit from Ilyin's anti-communist propaganda skills and his insider knowledge on Russian affairs, while having a cover story at hand that provided him plausible deniability.

During the years from 1939 until the postwar period, Ilyin published only a few full-length books, which all appeared under his real name. In 1939, a German edition of *The Path of Spiritual Renewal* was released in Switzerland by the Aehren publishing house, titled *The Eternal Foundations of Life*.³⁸⁶ In 1942, Ilyin published *The Nature and Character of Russian Culture*, also with Aehren, which was reprinted in 1944.³⁸⁷ In 1943, *The Lost Heart—A Book of Quiet Reflections* was published by Paul Haupt in Bern.³⁸⁸ In 1945, Aehren printed Ilyin's *View into the Distance—A Book of Insights and Hopes*.³⁸⁹

During 1940–1941, Ilyin concentrated on a text series for a correspondence reading course "On the Coming Russia." They were mimeographed at the publishing house of Madame de Ribopierre from Geneva. Copies were sent to subscribers around the world, whereby the daughters of Ilyin's colleague, B. A. Nikolsky—Elena and Natalia—used their names and addresses to obfuscate Ilyin's role in the endeavor. Funds for the

³⁸³ Search results for "Haas," Nauchnaya biblioteka MGU, <https://nbmgu.ru/search/?q=Haas&cat=ILIN>.

³⁸⁴ "Perepiska Gaasa Semiuelia (Samuel Haas), Direktora Shveitsarskogo Izdatel'stva Mittelpress i Il'ina I. A. za 1943 god. 26 pisem, 1 fotootkrytka Gaasa S., 18 Kopii pisem Il'ina I. A., 22, Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/perepiska-gaasa-semyuelya-samuel-haas-direktora-shveycarskogo-izdatelstva-mittelpress-i-ilina-i-a-za-1943-god-26-pisem-1-fotootkrytka-gaasa-s-18-kopiy-pisem-ilina-i-a-podpisi-ih-ergebener-r-r-k-i-i-p-j-peter.

³⁸⁵ Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, "Perepiska Gaasa Semiuelia," 17.

³⁸⁶ Ivan Ilyin, *Die ewigen Grundlagen des Lebens* (Zürich: Aehren, 1939).

³⁸⁷ Ivan Ilyin, *Wesen und Eigenart der russischen Kultur: Drei Betrachtungen* (Zürich: 1942, Aehren Verlag; 2nd edition Affoltern: Aehren Verlag, 1944).

³⁸⁸ Ivan Ilyin, *Das verschollene Herz. Ein Buch stiller Betrachtungen* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1943).

³⁸⁹ Ivan Ilyin, *Blick in die Ferne: Ein Buch der Einsichten und der Hoffnungen* (Affoltern: Aehren Verlag, 1945).

publication were collected at lectures that Ilyin gave during that period.³⁹⁰ A total of nine texts were produced ("Faith in Russia"; "On freedom"; "In search of justice"; "The main task"; "On strong power"; "On Russian nationalism"; "Confirmation of the personal principle"; "On the Russian idea"; and "The idea of subject education"); however, WWII put a premature end to the project. It would only be resumed after the war with the publication of *Our Tasks*.³⁹¹

Besides his publishing activity, Ilyin gave numerous lectures in Switzerland. According to Tsygankov:

...Ilyin wrote texts in German and delivered them to the Swiss audience at adult education centers, at various cultural associations, at the Zurich Circle for Russian Culture and History, and other study groups. During the war years...Ilyin had given three two-hour lectures and nine series of lectures in the Swiss adult education centers and folk universities, 20 lectures in the various cultural associations and circles, 26 special lectures and two series of lectures: "Main Problems of the Philosophy of Religion" and "Essence and Character of Russian Culture" in the Zurich Circle of Studies of Russian Culture and History.³⁹²

The Swiss state security kept a close eye on Ilyin's activities in the early 1940s. Ilyin was possibly aware of this, given that he went to great lengths to obfuscate his real identity as a "journalist." As of August 1941, a memo to the Zurich Police mentioned that Ilyin was "doing active politics."³⁹³ In March 1942, Swiss authorities seem to have started a review of Ilyin's activities and network, when a request was made to reassess the "voluminous dossier" on him assembled by the Swiss Federal Immigration Police.³⁹⁴ However, the latter continued to grant Ilyin the right to give lectures in Switzerland, whereby it kept the Swiss Federal Prosecutor's Office informed. The Immigration Police also consulted with the "Section Book Trade" of the Swiss Army Command regarding Ilyin's publications in Switzerland, which evaluated each publication before it went to print.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁰ Izergina, 'Belaia' ideologiya," 281.

³⁹¹ Izergina, 'Belaia' ideologiya," 282.

³⁹² Tsygankov, "Ivan Ilyin."

³⁹³ Swiss Federal Archives, "Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers)," Dokument 2 (Letter from the City Police Zurich to the Office of the Police Inspector Zurich from August 26, 1941).

³⁹⁴ Swiss Federal Archives, "Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers)," Dokument 4, 1 (Request by S. to Mr. Belsiger (?) to review the "voluminous dossier" on Ilyin assembled by the Swiss Federal Immigration Police).

³⁹⁵ Swiss Federal Archives, "Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers)," Dokument 4, 9-11 (Letter from "Section Book Trade" of the Swiss Army Command to the Swiss Immigrant Police from February 3, 1942).

The Tolstoy Foundation

As of 1941, Ilyin was in touch with the still-existing Tolstoy Foundation (TF), established on April 26, 1939 by Countess Alexandra Lvovna Tolstaya (1884–1979), the youngest daughter of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, and her old friend Tatiana Schaufuss. The effort was backed by powerful American and White supporters in the US and abroad, some of whom had supported Ilyin in the past, including Igor Sikorsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff. The foundation's Honorary Chairman was none other than former US President Herbert Hoover.³⁹⁶

The Tolstoy Foundation served as an intelligence front to facilitate the emigration of selected Russians to the United States and other countries during and after WWII. Consecrated in 1940 by the ROCOR, the Tolstoy Foundation was located at an inconspicuous cottage in Rockland County, New York. In a letter from January 23, 1942, the TF informed Ilyin that they had wired \$70 dollars to him in April 1941 and asked for confirmation of its arrival.³⁹⁷ It is not known what that money was for, but most likely it was to facilitate the repatriation of one of Ilyin's compatriots. Ilyin would again partner with the TF after the war to help a friend leave Europe.

It should be noted that in November 1942, the later CIA-chief Allen Dulles moved to Bern, Switzerland, where he lived for the duration of WWII. As Swiss Director of the wartime intelligence service OSS, he may well have been familiar with the TF's clandestine functions. From Switzerland, Dulles worked on intelligence about German plans and activities and established contacts with high-ranking Nazis during Operation Sunrise towards the end of the war. Although it is not known whether Dulles was aware of Ilyin's presence in Switzerland at that point, he must have been after the war, when Ilyin appeared in Dulles's circle of intelligence activities involving Whites and Russian Nazi collaborators.

Georg Brühshweiler

In the last years of the war, Ilyin was in contact with a representative of Andrey Vlasov, the Swiss journalist and Nazi collaborator Georg Brühshweiler (1897–1973). According to Tsygankov, Ilyin refused Brühshweiler's proposal to join the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (KONR), "because he did not want to cooperate with Nazis even indirectly."³⁹⁸ Apparently though, he had no concern that people he associated with did.

³⁹⁶ Scott Moss, "A History of the Tolstoy Foundation (1939–1989)" (Tolstoy Foundation, May 23, 1989), 5, http://tolstoyfoundation.org/pdfs/tf_history_s-moss_.pdf.

³⁹⁷ "Pis'mo Tolstoy Aleksandry L'vovny Il'inu I. A. Na Blanke Fonda Tolstogo," Spetsproiekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-tolstoy-aleksandry-lvovny-ilinu-i-a-na-blanke-fonda-tolstogo-tolstoy-foundation-inc.

³⁹⁸ Tsygankov, " "Ivan Iljin."

After the October Revolution, Brühnschweiler went to Switzerland in 1919, where he became a journalist for the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. When the Nazis attacked the USSR on June 22, 1941, he went to Germany to join their cause. Brühnschweiler worked for the Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg*), operating under the auspices of the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories of Alfred Rosenberg, whose aim was to loot cultural property in Nazi-occupied territories. In 1943, he established contacts with the NTS and the Vlasov movement. From mid-1944 onward, returning to Switzerland, he brokered secret negotiations with the Americans. According to Tsygankov, Brühnschweiler “confidentially mediated between German (non-Nazi) high officials around General A. Vlasov, Russian émigrés in Germany/Switzerland and western allies.”³⁹⁹ Tsygankov’s assessment that they were “non-Nazi” seems, if not apologetic, at odds with the facts.

As of May 1944, an informant of the Swiss intelligence service reported that Ilyin had good relations with Joseph Goebbels and was suspected to be a Gestapo agent:

Ilyin: a great protégé of Brunner and used by people in Parliament who don’t see through him and think they are smarter than he is. He is the author of the book “World at the Abyss,” which is used in all Nazi training courses in Switzerland. He has good relations with Goebbels and is suspected to be a Gestapo agent.⁴⁰⁰

That Ilyin was in touch with someone from the Gestapo is possible, as in his archive there is an extract of a letter to Vasily Biskupsky, dated August 20, 1944, whose sender is not identified.⁴⁰¹ There is, however, no indication that Swiss authorities acted upon those allegations in any way other than keeping a close track of Ilyin’s public appearances and publications.⁴⁰²

Postwar period

Following WWII, Ilyin remained a fervent supporter of the White cause, including the violent overthrow of the Soviet Union—this time looking towards the US as the most promising ally. Seeing a Third World War looming, Ilyin noted in the 1947 article “Again, News from the East” that liberating Russia from the Bolsheviks is primarily a Russian task, but Russian patriots should side with the US if war breaks out with the Soviet

³⁹⁹ “Personenverzeichnis: Brühnschweiler, Georg,” Iwan Iljin (internet project), <https://web.archive.org/web/20221005165922/http://iljinru.tsygankov.ru/german/go/persons.html#B>.

⁴⁰⁰ Swiss Federal Archives, “Iljin Iwan, 1883 (Dossiers),” Dokument 9 (report by informant Styx from May 20, 1944).

⁴⁰¹ “Vypiska Iz Pis’ma Generalu Biskupskomu Ot 20.08.1944, №659,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/vypiska-iz-pisma-generalu-biskupskomu-ot-20-08-1944-no659.

⁴⁰² Tobler, “Exklusive Archivrecherche zu Iwan Iljin.”

Union—a stance that he reiterated in the years to come, even after the Soviets had developed the atomic bomb.⁴⁰³

Nashi Zadachi (1948–1954)

Intent on resuming his role as ideological figurehead among the Whites, Ilyin got back in touch with several of his compatriots, some of whom had stayed in Nazi Germany throughout the war. Among the first was his former ROVS collaborator Alexei von Lampe. During WWII, von Lampe had coordinated the distribution of Soviet POWs in Germany and German-occupied territories. In 1944, he became a member of the Nazi-collaborationist KONR, the governing body of Andrey Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army. Ilyin helped von Lampe and his family escape from Germany to Paris in 1946, and after that, they resumed their close collaboration.⁴⁰⁴

In 1948, Ilyin started contributing to the ROVS newsletter conceived by the ROVS chairman General A. P. Arkhangelsky; his deputy, von Lampe; and the historian Sergei Petrovich Melgunov as editor.⁴⁰⁵ According to Izergina, the weekly newsletter provided ROVS members “with political and ideological ‘considerations’ about the ‘most important topics’ with the purpose of ‘The formation of a single, clear White opinion.’”⁴⁰⁶ Copies of the newsletter, which appeared until 1954, were sent to ROVS members and sympathizers confidentially. A collection of the 216 articles that were contributed to the effort were published in two volumes under the title *Nashi zadachi (Our Tasks)* by some of Ilyin's followers in 1956 in Paris.

Ilyin's contribution to the newsletter concentrated on “the ‘fundamental foundations’ of the state structure of the future Russia,” a sort of Christofascist monarchy, which according to Izergina should be:

Christian and national in spirit (calling for the implementation of a “law of truth” to rule the lives of Russians); legal (“all are subject to the law, without exception”); unified (unified territory, unified state power, etc.); sacred (“serving the cause of God on earth”), based on historical succession (founded by our ancestors, approved by nationwide sacrifices, cannot be ended by temporary “troubles, uprisings, invasions and dominance”); binding people into a fraternal union...by a single patriotic solidarity....⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰³ M. N. Nachapkin, “Poslevoennoe razvitie mira v publitsistike I.A. Il'ina: Doklad Na VII Mezhdunarodnykh Il'inskikh Nauchno-Bogoslovskikh Chteniakh (Ekaterinburg, 27-28 Aprelia),” *Zhurnal Zolotoy Lev*, no. 213–214 (August 24, 2009), <http://www.zlev.ru/index.php?p=article&nomer=25&article=1332>.

⁴⁰⁴ Giovanni Savino, “From the White Armies to Nazi Collaboration: Alexei von Lampe (1885–1967),” *IERES Occasional Papers*, No. 7, October 2020, 19.

⁴⁰⁵ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 282.

⁴⁰⁶ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 282.

⁴⁰⁷ Izergina, “‘Belaia’ ideologiya,” 283.

That Ilyin remained a fascist apologist until the end of his life is evidenced by other submissions to *Nashi zadachi*. A prime example is certainly his pamphlet "On Fascism" from 1948, published a year and a half after the Nuremberg trial, giving counsel to a new generation of fascists on how to avoid Hitler's mistakes.⁴⁰⁸ According to Peter, Ilyin "criticized only the 'mistakes' of German fascism, for example, its hostility to religion (and very softly, racism and the holocaust not being mentioned at all), and strongly praised the new fascist regimes on the Iberian peninsula."⁴⁰⁹

In 1948, Ilyin published an anonymous pamphlet in German, "The Soviet State Is Not Russia—Theses Pro Memoria."⁴¹⁰ That year, he also contributed the article "On Power" to a collection of articles "In Honor of Metropolitan Anastasius on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of His Ministry and the 75th Anniversary of His Life"—in praise of the First Hierarch of the ROCOR who had been an avid Nazi-collaborator.⁴¹¹

Contact with Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich (1948–1954)

From December 1948 onward, Ilyin frequently exchanged letters with Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich (1917–1992), the son of Kirill Vladimirovich, who had proclaimed himself Tsar in exile in the early interwar period. There exist eleven letters from Ilyin to Vladimir Kirillovich, and over twenty letters and postcards from the Grand Duke and his consort Leonida Bagration of Mukhrani to Ilyin.⁴¹² To one of his letters from December 30, 1950, Ilyin attached a memorandum laying out a strategy for toppling the Soviet Union, probably for the Grand Duke to double-check. Beginning with the sentence "The United States, in its struggle with the Soviet communist state, has a powerful ally," the memorandum reiterated Ilyin's stance about siding with the US in

⁴⁰⁸ Ivan Ilyin, "O fashizme," *Nashi zadachi*, 1948, <http://apocalypse.orthodoxy.ru/problems/037.htm>.

⁴⁰⁹ Peter, "Ivan Il'in i fashizm."

⁴¹⁰ Anonymous (Ivan Ilyin), *Der Sowjetstaat ist nicht Russland, Thesen pro memoria* (1948). The German pamphlet was republished in Russian in Iurii Lisitsa (ed.), Ivan Ilyin, *O Bol'shevizme i Kommunizme. O Natsional'nom Prizvanii Rossii* (Moscow: Russkaia Kniga, 1998), 323 ff.

⁴¹¹ "Sbornik statei 'V chest' Mitropolita Anastasiia po sluchayu 50-letiya ego sviashchenosluzheniia i 75-letiya zhizni,'" Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/sbornik-statey-v-chest-mitropolita-anastasiya-po-sluchayu-50-letiya-ego-svyashchenosluzheniya-i-75-letiya-zhizni.

⁴¹² "Pis'ma Il'ina I. A. Vel. Kn. Vladimiru Kirillovichu. 11 Pisem. Kopii," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-ilina-i-a-vel-kn-vladimiru-kirillovichu-11-pisem-kopii; "Pis'ma Vel. Kn. Vladimira Kirillovicha i Leonidy Georgievnu Il'inu I. A. 21 Pis'mo, 3 Otkrytki, 1 Telegramma," Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-vel-kn-vladimira-kirillovicha-i-leonidy-georgievny-ilinu-i-a-21-pismo-3-otkrytki-1-telegramma.

overthrowing the Soviet Union. All the while it advertised Kirill Vladimirovich as the right fit for heading such a struggle, as well as a potential monarch in a post-Soviet state.

The ten-point memorandum that Ilyin sent to the Grand Duke can be summed up as follows:⁴¹³

- (1) In the emerging world conflict, it is necessary to overthrow the communists—quickly and with little bloodshed.
- (2) The only way to achieve this is by depriving the Bolsheviks of their armies, i.e., by “turning the Communist troops into Russian-nationalist troops, to join the side of the freedom fighters.”
- (3) Russia has never been a republic, and a “republican legal consciousness” is alien to its people. While leaving open the question of a future state form, the memorandum argues that a “transition to a democratic government is not possible at once” while at the same time praising the monarchy for having “served the national, religious, and national-patriotic cause.”
- (4) Russian people have never truly sympathized with communism; 80% of Russians are peasants who want to live on their own land. That is why Red Army soldiers surrendered en masse during the “Winter War” and the Great Patriotic War.
- (5) “For a thousand years the Russian people’s moral conscience has been based on religious faith and on the trust in the monarch.” Thus, no one “will have the same authority as the rightful heir to the throne [Vladimir Kirillovich], who thinks only of the national rebirth of his beloved people.”
- (6) “Russian soldiers must be told that no one threatens national Russia with conquest, revenge, or dismemberment”; and “that soldiers and officers escaping from the Communists are safeguarded and protected from military intervention.”
- (7) Territories that never belonged to “national Russia” and were arbitrarily occupied by the Soviets must be returned.
- (8) Not a communist and revolutionary Soviet state is needed, but a “peaceful and loyal national Russia.”
- (9) The specific forms of how the points in the memorandum should be implemented are subject to further oral discussion.

In Point 10, Ilyin clearly denotes Vladimir Kirillovich as the legitimate heir to the “throne in exile” and that the memorandum had the Grand Duke’s approval:

⁴¹³ Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, “Pis’mo Il’ina I. A. Vel. Kn. Vladimiru Kirillovichu,” 13 ff.

The content of this memorandum is known to the Grand Duke, head of the dynasties, and approved by him. Throughout the Second World War, he, having a moral aversion to any totalitarian despotism, and clearly seeing the conquest plans of the German aggressor, categorically refused to make such a call to the Soviet army. Now, however, he has a very different view of the forthcoming struggle, and especially of the intentions of the American people.

This was, of course, a blatant lie. After Kirill Vladimirovich died in October 1938, his son Vladimir Kirillovich assumed the title of Head of the Imperial Family of Russia, a position which he claimed from 1938 to his death. In 1938, he also took on the leadership of the Russian Legitimist Movement, and kept up the contact with the pro-Nazi Mladorossy.⁴¹⁴ As late as 1944, the Grand Duke moved from France to Amorbach in Nazi Germany.⁴¹⁵ Then, Vladimir Kirillovich went to fascist Spain, where he was received by Generalissimo Franco and subsequently alternated between Spain and France.⁴¹⁶ It was notably Ilyin's old colleague, Yuri Lodyzhensky, who became the secretary of the Grand Duke in Madrid before he joined his family in Sao Paulo, Brazil. There, he became a "Representative of the Kulaevsky Foundation and longtime president of the Literary and Historical Circle of São Paulo" and contributed to Russian émigré journals.⁴¹⁷

Resuming old ties

As evidenced by a series of photos from 1950, after the war, Ilyin met with his old friend Roman Zile, who came to play a preeminent role in the preservation and commemoration of Ilyin's work after his death.⁴¹⁸ In the immediate postwar period, Zile found his way to the Mönchehof POW camp in Germany where NTS members regrouped, and where he headed the NTS publishing house. Sometime in the early 1950s, Zile moved to Morocco, where, according to Bazanov, "he participated in the work of the ROVS."⁴¹⁹ In the early 1960s, Zile finally settled in Germany where he worked as an announcer and translator at the broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* in Cologne.

⁴¹⁴ Graf, *Au Service de La Maison Impériale*.

⁴¹⁵ Dmitry Zhukov, "Nasledniki Prestola," *Sovershenno Sekretno*, August 6, 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20220401145858/https://www.sovsekretno.ru/articles/natsledniki-prestola/>.

⁴¹⁶ "U Romanovykh net imushchestvennykh pretenziy," *Interfax.ru*, February 24, 2010, <https://www.interfax.ru/interview/125015>.

⁴¹⁷ "Iurii Ilyich Lodyzhensky," *Geni*, <https://www.geni.com/people/Iurii-Ilyich-Lodyzhensky/6000000037517618909>.

⁴¹⁸ "Il'in I.A. i Zile R.M. v 1950 g. Fotografii," *Spetsproekt Ivan Il'in*, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/ilin-i-a-i-zile-r-m-v-1950-g-fotografii.

⁴¹⁹ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 123.

After the war, Ilyin also resumed his ties to members of the Klimov family. There is a picture of Ilyin alongside Georgy Nikolaevich (Ben-) Chavchavadze (1921–1997) and his wife Irina (née Klimova), who visited the Ilyins in late 1950/early 1951 in Zollikon—both of whom had collaborated with the Nazis.⁴²⁰ Irina and Ilyin's correspondence reveals that they had always maintained warm personal relations.⁴²¹ During WWII, Irina Chavchavadze had worked as a typist at the headquarters of the 1st infantry division of the Armed Forces in Münsingen (Germany) in 1944–1945.⁴²² Although difficult to ascertain, it has been stated that for some time Irina even served as the secretary of Andrey Vlasov, which is how she had allegedly met her future husband, a Nazi officer named Georgy Ben-Chavchavadze.⁴²³

Georgy Ben-Chavchavadze was born in Kharkov in 1921. Ben-Chavchavadze described himself as a son of Nikolai Chavchavadze, a White officer, who was executed by the Bolsheviks in the basement of their family's house, when his wife was still pregnant with Georgy. According to Georgy, his family was relocated to Germany in 1933 as part of an exchange for Austrian Communists.⁴²⁴ Research in the Kyiv SBU archive has revealed that Georgy's father was a ChK-GPU officer executed for looting in 1926.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁰ Nasledie russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina, "I. A. i N. N. Il'iny na fotografiiakh."

⁴²¹ Ilyin, *Pis'ma*.

⁴²² Orynany Tanatarova, "Gde vlasovtsy brali sebe frontovykh podrug," Russkaia semerka, August 12, 2019, <https://russian7.ru/post/gde-vlasovtsy-brali-sebe-frontovykh-pod/>.

⁴²³ Tanatarova, "Gde vlasovtsy brali sebe frontovykh podrug."

⁴²⁴ "Interview with G. N. Ben-Chavchavadze," *Pervaia Stolitsa*, 1997, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIF0nORZe-k>; Evgenii Aleksandrov, *Russkie v Severnoi Amerike. Bibliograficheskii Slovar'* (San Francisco: Headman, 2005).

⁴²⁵ "Vypiska Iz Telgrammy Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del USSR A. Uspenskogo Zamesiteliu Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del SSSR M. Frinovskomu ob Areste Zheny Sekretaria Germanskogo Konsul'stva v g. Kieve Germana Shtrekera – Luidmily Shtrekker," May 10, 1938, Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy, F.15-Op.02-Spr.7.

After this death, his mother dated Hermann Strecker, a Nazi diplomat and, as the Soviet KGB documents argue, a spy. Ukrainian NKVD had requested Soviet People's Commissar for Internal Affairs Nikolai Ezhov to arrest Strecker and his partner Luidmila (Georgy's mother) at least three times based on growing evidence of Strecker's espionage activities.⁴²⁶ Moscow declined these requests and the Ukrainian NKVD started to take active measures, such as public threats to household workers, to push the Streckers and some other German Nazi civil servants out of the USSR.⁴²⁷ This operation was successful: Hermann Strecker, Luidmila, and Georgy left for Germany in 1938.

During the Nazi era, Georgy became commander of the reconnaissance



Georgy Nikolaevich and Irina Georgievna Ben-Chavchavadze visiting the Ilyins in Zollikon. Late 1950 / early 1951.

squadron of the Wehrmacht's 56th Panzer Corps which was deployed at the Eastern Front. Subsequently, he joined Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army and became publisher of the KONR journal *Union*. He also joined the NTS, for which he distributed leaflets in the Soviet zone. After the

⁴²⁶ "Narodnomu Komissaru Vnutrennikh Del Souiza SSR General'nomu Komissaru Gosudarstvennoi Bezopastnosti tov. Ezhovu," September 11, 1937, Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy, F F.16-Op.01-Spr.0120-0443; "Vypiska Iz Telgrammy Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del USSR A. Uspenskogo Zamesiteliu Narkoma Vnutrennikh Del SSSR M. Frinovskomu ob Areste Zheny Sekretaria Germanskogo Konsul'stva v g. Kieve Germana Shtrekera – Luidmily Shtrekker," May 10, 1938, Haluzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy, F.15-Op.02-Spr.7.

⁴²⁷ "Verbal'naia Nota Germanskogo General'nogo Konsul'stva v g. Kieve Upravleniiu NKID SSSR pri pravitel'stve USSR otnositel'ni Ugroz Aresta Po Otnosheniiu k Domrabotnistam Sotrudnikov Germanskogo Konsul'stva Vilke I Shtrekker." March 3, 1938, PA AA Botschaft Moskau. Bd 77.

dissolution of his division in May 1945, he went east with a group of subordinates, and until August participated in partisan anti-communist resistance in Slovakia and Galicia. After the war, he emigrated to Canada and worked at the Department of Natural Sciences at the University of Ottawa.⁴²⁸ One of his neighbors in Canada revealed in a private interview that in 1945 Georgy surrendered to the French, worked in the Allies' filtration camps for Nazi soldiers, and then was recruited by Canadian intelligence and facilitated its contacts with the KGB.⁴²⁹

At their 1951 last meeting with Irina and Georgy, Ilyin could not assess that the Chavchavdze-Klimov family will play an important role in the revival of memory of him in Putin's Russia, which is discussed in detail in the third chapter.

Axioms of Religious Experience (1953)

One year before his death, in 1953, Ilyin published his magnum opus, *Axioms of Religious Experience*, printed in two volumes in Paris, which he had been working on since 1919. Drafts, notes, book excerpts, and communication with other people regarding the publication comprise thousands of pages.⁴³⁰ In the publication of *Axioms*, Ilyin received support from Vladimir Pavlovich Ryabushinsky (1873–1955), from whom Ilyin received over 600 letters in the period between 1948 and 1954. Ryabushinsky, a banker and businessman from an eponymous dynasty of merchants and Old Believers, was a White of the first hour who had served as an advisor to Wrangel on economic matters during the Russian Civil War. Exiled in France, Ryabushinsky founded and headed the Icon Society (Obshchestvo "Ikona"), of which he was honorary chairman from 1951 until his death in 1955. In 1954, Ilyin helped Ryabushinsky in his efforts to emigrate to the US with the help of the TF.

It is quite a feat that the publisher of *Axioms* is never identified in the literature and, still today, is unknown. It is known, however, that the work was printed by the still existing Imprimerie de Navarre, which did printing jobs for various foreign language publications from France and abroad.⁴³¹ The Imprimerie started in the early 1920s with printing Russian-language publications and apparently had turned into a hub of White activity in Paris. *Axioms* was among the first publications of the Imprimerie when it restarted its business in 1953. That year, it also performed print jobs for English-language journals, such as the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, the *American Historical Review*, and others; however, it returned to strictly publishing Russian-language books by 1954. Notably,

⁴²⁸ Tanatarova, "Gde vlasovtsy brali sebe frontovyykh podrug."

⁴²⁹ The interviewee lived next to the Ben-Chavchavadzes in Canada and held the family in high regard. We keep him under an anonymous identity.

⁴³⁰ Search results for "Aksiomy," Nauchnaia biblioteka MGU, <https://nbgmu.ru/search/?q=%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%8B&cat=ILIN>.

⁴³¹ Ivan Ilyin, *Aksiomy religioznogo opyta issledovanie* (Paris: Imprimerie de Navarre, 1953), <https://www.worldcat.org/title/1332002700>.

the Imprimerie did printing jobs for the YMCA-Press, which in 1945 restarted publishing Russian-language books.⁴³²

It could well be that the YMCA-Press was behind the publication of *Axioms*, particularly since it is known that Ilyin contacted its director Donald Lowrie in May 1951, inquiring whether there was any interest in publishing the work. Lowrie had succeeded Paul B. Anderson as director of the publishing house in 1947, with whom Ilyin had been in touch in the mid-1920s, and, in the postwar period, the YMCA-Press continued to be controlled by US intelligence.⁴³³ Ilyin mentioned that “A year and a half ago in Munich you had a conversation with Metropolitan Anastasius about the possibility of publishing my new work on the philosophy of religion. His eminence Anastasius wrote to me about this, notifying me that, in principle, the door of the publishing house led by you (Partnership of United Publishers) was open to me.”⁴³⁴

While the provenance of *Axioms* could not be sufficiently established, it is apparent that, besides the YMCA-Press, in the postwar years Ilyin engaged with several American anticommunist intelligence projects that involved White émigrés, whose éminence grise was George F. Kennan. After Kennan was booted off the CIA’s covert action branch (Office of Policy Coordination), in the early 1950s he was able to impel the Ford Foundation to fund some of his anti-communist pet projects.

To that end, Kennan, George Fischer, and others devised the East European Fund, incorporated by the State Department on March 15, 1951, which was among the first grantees awarded by the Ford Foundation. In the early 1950s, the East European Fund sponsored several projects involving White émigrés, including the TF, the YMCA-Press, the Chekhov Publishing

⁴³² Aleksei Tolstoi, *Kniaz Serebrianyi: povest?* (Paris: Imprimerie de Navarre [for YMCA Press], 1945), <http://books.google.com/books?id=glwYAQAAMAAJ>.

⁴³³ Stroop, “‘A Christian Solution to International Tension,’” 192; “Pis’ma i dogovory s izdatel’stvami IMKA-PRESS (Parizh, Frantsiia), Grad Kitezh (Berlin, Germaniia), Russkii kul’turnyi odbor» (Belgrad, Serbiia), Russkoe akademicheskoe obshchestvo v Rige Il’inu I. A. dogovory ob izdanii knig Il’ina. Avtografy Il’ina I. A., redaktorov Vysheslavtseva B., Andersona Paulia, Domozhirova V., [Klimova G. Ye.], neustanovlennykh lits,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pisma-i-dogovory-s-izdatelstvami-imka-press-parizh-franciya-grad-kitezh-berlin-germaniya-russkiy-kulturnyy-odbor-belgrad-serbiya-russkoe-akademicheskoe-obshchestvo-v-rige-ilinu-i-a-dogovory-ob-izdanii-knig-ilina-avtografy-ilina-i-a-redaktorov-vysheslavtseva-b-andersona-paulia-domozhirova-v-klimova-g-e-neustanovlennykh-lit.

⁴³⁴ “Pis’mo Il’ina I. A. Lauri Donal’du Ivanovichu, rukovoditeliu izdatel’stva IMKA-Press,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pismo-ilina-i-a-lauri-donald-ivanovichu-rukovoditelyu-izdatelstva-imka-press.

House, and the Research Program on the USSR at Columbia University—of which Ilyin was in contact with the first three.⁴³⁵

In March 1953, Ilyin sent two manuscripts to the New York-based Chekhov publishing house (1951–1958) in order for them to consider publishing *On Darkness and Enlightenment: A Book of Literary Criticism* and *The Singing Heart: Book of Quiet Contemplation*. Apparently, he did not hear back from them, and fifteen months later requested that the manuscripts be returned to his “trusted liaison,” Grigory Alexandrovich Alexeev in Sea Cliff, New York.⁴³⁶ As with the Paris-based YMCA-Press, the Chekhov publishing house had the double purpose of employing Russian émigrés for anti-communist propaganda, as well as keeping anti-Bolshevik Russian networks alive that could be exploited in adjacent intelligence projects. Besides receiving support from Kennan’s East European Fund, the YMCA-Press and Chekhov were connected through the North American YMCA.⁴³⁷

There is yet another indicator that Ilyin was well aware of US-funded support structures employing Russian émigrés. In his archive, there are numerous articles related to the Coordinating Center of the Anti-Bolshevik Struggle (KTAB), a CIA-sponsored effort to bring the most important postwar Russian émigré organizations under one umbrella.⁴³⁸ The KTAB was established on November 7, 1951, “at a conference in Wiesbaden, Germany, where representatives of Russian and non-Russian émigré political organizations promulgated their goals for the ‘liberation of all

⁴³⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (Penguin, 2012), Chapter 17 (electronic version); Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 189; “Research Program on the USSR” (Columbia University, n.d.), http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/inside/projects/findingaids/scans/pdfs/ldpd_bak_4077983.pdf.

⁴³⁶ “Perepiska Il’ina I. A. s izdatel’stvom ‘Chekhov Publishing House’ N’iu York, SSHA. 1 Pis’mo Il’ina (3 avtorizovannykh ekzempliara), 2 pis’ma ot izdatel’stva. podpisi: Terent’eva Tat’iana (Associate Editor), Lani W., sekretar,’” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/perepiska-ilina-i-a-s-izdatelstvom-chekhov-publishing-house-nyu-york-ssha-1-pismo-ilina-3-avtorizovannykh-ekzemplyara-2-pisma-ot-izdatelstva-podpisi-terenteva-tatyana-associate-editor-lani-e-sekretar.

⁴³⁷ “Collection: YMCA Russian Publishing Work Files,” University of Minnesota, <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/7/resources/994>.

⁴³⁸ “I.A. Il’in. Sbornik ‘Rossiiskii demokrat no. 2, 1953 (№23) so stat’yami Koordinatsionnogo Tsentra Antibol’shevistskoi Bor’by (KTSAB),” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-sbornik-rossiiskiy-demokrat-no2-1953-no23-so-statyami-koordinatsionnogo-centra-antibolshevistskoy-borby-kcab; “I.A. Il’in. Vyrezki iz gazet ‘Novaia zaria’ i ‘Russkaia mysl’ o Koordinatsionnom Tsentre Antibol’shevistskoi Bor’by (KTSAB). Vypiski i zametki o deiateliakh Russkogo Zarubezh’ya i Staline,” Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in, https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/i-a-ilin-vyrezki-iz-gazet-novaya-zarya-i-russkaia-mysl-o-koordinatsionnom-centre-antibolshevistskoy-borby-kcab-vypiski-i-zametki-o-deyateliakh-russkogo-zarubezhya-i-staline.

their peoples from the Bolshevik dictatorship.”⁴³⁹ During its brief existence, the KTAB was controlled by the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, a CIA front handling contacts with Russian émigrés. However, the effort failed due to irreconcilable internal discord among the émigré groups involved.

Ultimately, Ilyin’s endeavor to find new supporters and platforms for his anticommunist struggle were cut short when he died on December 21, 1954 at the age of 71 in Zollikon. As will be shown in the next chapter on Ilyin’s rehabilitation, there was an avid interest among Whites, as well as American benefactors, to preserve and disseminate Ilyin’s work after his death. Without anticipating too much, this called into action some of Ilyin’s murkiest contacts, including Roman Zile, who “contributed to the transfer of the archive of I. A. Ilyin to the Library of the University of Michigan.”⁴⁴⁰ To that end, he notably compiled a list of pseudonyms that Ilyin had used throughout his career.⁴⁴¹

Some of Ilyin’s most fervent supporters, including Zile and a member of the Klimov family, came together in the creation of the Professor Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin Society, established on December 21, 1956. The Society became instrumental in preserving Ilyin’s vast archives, kickstarting his rehabilitation as victim of the Nazis and his elevation to the highest Russian intellectual echelon.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider’s Memoir of Radio Liberty* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 16.

⁴⁴⁰ Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy*, 123.

⁴⁴¹ “Psevdonimy Professora I. A. Il’ina. Spisok, sostavlennyy R.M. Zile, Soglasno Zapisi Il’ina,” *Spetsproekt Ivan Il’in*.

⁴⁴² “The founders of the Commonwealth in addition to Natalia Nikolaevna became Elena Fedorovna von Baumgarten (1891–after 1970), then living in Zurich; Roman Martynovich Zile (1900–after 1970), who lived in Germany; Alexey Alexandrovich Kvartirov (1911–1980), who lived in Geneva, and those who moved to the USA; Konstantin Evgenievich Klimov (1896–1974), who lived in Canada.” O. V. Lisitsa, “Arkhiv I.A. Il’ina v MGU: Istoriia peredachi arkhiva.”

Chapter 2

An Un-Orthodox Doctrine of Just War: Ivan Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force*

With Ilyin's life and intellectual afterlife so thoroughly covered in Chapter 1, I will forgo an introductory biography and proceed directly to my discussion of some of his ideas about authority and coercive force. I am concerned here with Ilyin's best-known work: *On Resistance to Evil by Force* (1925). While scholars and pundits have in recent years tended to focus on the posthumous *Our Tasks* (1945) as an example of the dangers of his philosophy (no doubt for its unambiguously positive presentation of fascism), Ilyin's moral justification of violence in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* offers greater insight into the role and influence of his ideas in Russia's current cultural and political development.

I argue here that *On Resistance to Evil by Force* constitutes Ilyin's attempt at an extra-canonical Russian Orthodox doctrine of just war (*bellum iustum*) and suggest that this finding helps to explain the recent resurgence of this text's popularity. Furthermore, I argue that with *On Resistance to Evil by Force* Ilyin sought not only to give religious justification to the Russian Whites in violence (that is, war) against the Bolsheviks, but also that he sought to do so on specific philosophical and theological grounds. Although the concept of just war is inextricable from the related notions of authority (*auctoritas*) and sovereignty (*potestas* or *imperium*), which are central to the Orthodox concept of *symphonia*,⁴⁴³ just war as such is not recognized as canonical in Eastern Orthodox theology.⁴⁴⁴ Rather, the consensus of Orthodox theologians seems to be that, although war is sometimes inevitable, it is never "just." Thus, the absence of a canonical Orthodox formulation of just war affords Ilyin the opportunity to put forward a version of the doctrine—a call to arms in which he links salvation to chauvinism. Yet this position of the Orthodox Church also forces Ilyin to disguise the real nature of his ideological project. For this reason, in part,

⁴⁴³ The Eastern Orthodox concept of *symphonia* is generally described as a normative theory according to which church and state complement and respect one another, with neither presuming to dominate. For a thorough analysis of "the origins of the concept of symphonia, its historical development, and its utilization by the Russian Orthodox Church as a normative ideal for church-state relations," (p. 474) see Mikhail Antonov, "Church-State Symphonia: Its Historical Development and its Applications by the Russian Orthodox Church," *Journal of Law and Religion* 35, no. 3 (December 2020): 474–493.

⁴⁴⁴ See, for example, Philip LeMasters, "Orthodox Perspectives on Peace, War and Violence," *Ecumenical Review* 63, no. 1, (March 2011), 56. LeMasters observes, "In contrast to Western Christianity, there is no explicit just war theory in Eastern Orthodoxy. Certainly, the Byzantine Empire and other Orthodox nations have had rules of conduct for soldiers and expectations about when and how it was appropriate for nations to go to war. But even observance of the strictest moral and professional code does not make war good."

he frames his moral-theological justification of coercive force as a rebuttal to Leo Tolstoy's earlier case for pacifism in *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence* (1908). Using Tolstoy as a foil, Ilyin creates the appearance of merely amplifying the Russian Orthodox Church's 1901 anathema of the late Tolstoy's pacifist teachings while in fact laundering an extra-canonical doctrine of just war.⁴⁴⁵ Ultimately, I argue that Ilyin's philosophy in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* is not only neither Russian nor Orthodox, but it is also little more than a Russian translation of the same medieval Catholic theology of just war that was used to justify the European Crusades.

On Resistance to Evil by Force

Ilyin published *On Resistance to Evil by Force* in 1925, just three years after arriving in Germany on the so-called philosophers' ship in 1922. Yet the events of the intervening years clearly influenced the work. In 1923, the Bolshevik Red Army defeated the last hold-out of the monarchist White Army in Yakutia in eastern Siberia, and in 1924, White Army General Pyotr Wrangle founded the Russian All-Military Union (Russkiy Obshche-Voinitskiy Soyuz: ROVS) for the purpose of maintaining a military organization for future offensives against the Bolshevik Army. That same year, Ilyin met with Wrangle at the center of anti-Bolshevik activity in Germany, Seeon Abbey in Bavaria, and became involved with ROVS initiatives. By the time Ilyin published *On Resistance to Evil by Force* in 1925, he was already acting as a ROVS ideologue, and the text was thus not so much a philosophical dialog with the late Tolstoy or a rumination on the misguidedness of pacifism as it was the articulation of a reactionary ideology. Ilyin wrote *On Resistance to Evil by Force* for a readership of anti-Bolshevik exiles and émigrés to unite them in their hatred of Bolshevism under a banner of Orthodoxy and autocracy.

It has been observed that *On Resistance to Evil by Force* represents a continuation of Ilyin's earlier philosophical preoccupations. This is no doubt the case. His first scholarly article, published in the *Journal of the Moscow Psychological Society* in 1910, was titled "The Concepts of Law and Force."⁴⁴⁶ Yet Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* of 15 years later is not only a reactionary turn, but also utilitarian and markedly theological. For this reason, it is not only the continuity of Ilyin's thought in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* that is of interest, but also its evolution. The transformation from a theoretical to a theological and ideological presentation of his ideas is sometimes overlooked or goes unremarked. For example, a recent and relatively benign assessment of Ilyin's thought by Paul Valliere recognizes the continuation of Ilyin's earlier ideas about coercive force in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* and even notes that in that text "his rhetoric was at times

⁴⁴⁵ Ivan A. Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force* (Zvolen, Slovakia: Taxiarch Press, 2018), 4. See also the appendix of the Taxiarch edition for a translation of the ROC's anathema of Tolstoy, 213–215.

⁴⁴⁶ Ivan Ilyin, "Poniatia prava i sily," *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* 21, no. 2, kn. 101 (1910): 1–38.

extreme.”⁴⁴⁷ However, Valliere fails to acknowledge the historical context or Ilyin’s role as a ROVS ideologue at the time of its writing.⁴⁴⁸ What Valliere and others miss is precisely the evolution and instrumentality of Ilyin’s ideas of authority and coercive force, incorporating them into a theological doctrine of just war as part of his collaboration with Wrangle and ROVS.

Not only is Ilyin’s *On Resistance to Evil by Force* an especially bellicose contribution to Russian thought, but it is also insidious because its influence cannot reliably be traced through direct references to the text nor even to Ilyin himself. As a formulation of a just war theology, *On Resistance to Evil by Force* is a free-standing theological argument—portable, populist in its Orthodox diction, and not dependent on the entirety of Ilyin’s philosophical corpus for context.

In focusing on the dangers of Ilyin’s philosophy, as well as on Ilyin as “Putin’s philosopher,”⁴⁴⁹ some recent scholars and political analysts risk missing the crucial point that the concept of just war neither begins nor ends with Ilyin. However, were it to be approached as a doctrine of just war, Ilyin’s argument might be fruitfully compared to similar ideological projects both in and outside of Russia. This includes important antecedents and analogs in the West. In addition to the early paradigmatic example worked out by the late antique Catholic theologian Augustine of Hippo (354–430), which is widely acknowledged as the first fully articulated Christian doctrine of just war, it would encompass the rationale behind Pope Urban II’s 1095 “*Deus vult!*” (“God wills it!”) call to the First Crusade (1096–1099) and Martin Luther’s vicious theological justification of the suppression of the 1524–1525 German Peasants’ Revolt in his tract, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants* (1525).⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Paul Valliere, “Ivan Ilyin: Philosopher of Law, Force, and Faith,” in Paul Valliere and Randall A Poole, eds., *Law and the Christian Tradition in Modern Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 315.

⁴⁴⁸ Valliere does mention Ilyin’s involvement with ROVS, but only beginning in 1927, once Ilyin had launched his own journal, *Russkii Kolokol* (The Russian Bell), which appeared in nine issues between 1927 and 1930, and only in the context of Ilyin’s attempt to distinguish his own politics from contemporaneous non-Russian fascist movements. See Valliere, “Ivan Ilyin,” 319–320.

⁴⁴⁹ This will be addressed later in the chapter.

⁴⁵⁰ Similar to Ilyin’s *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, Luther’s brief 1525 tract serves as a theological justification for the use of violence against the lower classes for their rebellion. Luther, responding to the Peasants’ Revolt, instructs his readers: “Therefore whoever can, should now strike, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, and consider that there can be nothing more poisonous, damaging and devilish than a rebellious man. It is just like when one must club dead a mad dog; if you do not smite him, he will smite you—and a whole land with you.” See Martin Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, in *On the Freedom of a Christian, with related texts*, Tryntje Helfferich, ed. trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2013), 118.

One might also compare *On Resistance to Evil by Force* to other interwar ideological projects such as the *Metaphysics of War*, by Italian occultist and fascist ideologue Julius Evola (1898–1974),⁴⁵¹ and the Romanian fascist manifesto known as *The Legionary Phenomenon*, by Legionary ideologue Nae Ionescu (1890–1940).⁴⁵² Finally, such comparison would be a practical means of identifying overlap with contemporary Russian far-right and fascist ideological projects like Aleksandr Dugin's *Philosophy of War*, as well as patterns of co-belligerence in the positions of Patriarch Kirill of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church.⁴⁵³

Despite Ilyin's recent gaining attention as "Putin's philosopher," then, I argue that what is most interesting—and most disconcerting—about Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* has neither to do with Putin nor, particularly, with Ilyin himself. Rather, it concerns the emergence of a mix of just war and holy-war theology in popular—if not (yet) canonical—Russian Orthodox thinking. Indeed, with little or no alteration, Ilyin's call to arms in defense of what he presents as spirituality lends itself to virtually any stripe of Christian nationalism. This understanding of *On Resistance to Evil by Force* as a justification of religious violence also helps to account for the resurgent popularity of the text, with multiple recent editions in Russian, full translations in Serbian, English, and German,⁴⁵⁴ as well as partial online translations in at least French, Romanian, and Georgian.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ Evola's *Metaphysics of War* is a collection of essays written in the 1930s and '40s. Evola also develops the themes of duty and sacralized violence and, at one point, compares his project to that of Augustine. See Julius Evola, *Metaphysics of War* (Coppell, Texas: Arktos Media Ltd., 2011) 114.

⁴⁵² See Jason Roberts, "Nae Ionescu's 1938 Legionary Phenomenon: A 'Missing Link' between Evola and Dugin," *Journal of Illiberalism Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (spring 2023), pp. 21–45, <https://doi.org/10.53483/xclt3547>.

⁴⁵³ Several sources have reported Patriarch Kirill's proclamation of the remission of sins for sacrificing one's life in the war against Ukraine. Radio Free Europe, for example, reports that "Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has told his followers that 'sacrifice in the course of carrying out your military duty washes away all sins.'" The significance of this reasoning lies in its similarity to the logic of Ivan Ilyin and Augustine of Hippo in their incorporation of "duty" into their respective theories of just war. A comparison of Ilyin and Augustine forms the bulk of this chapter. See, for example, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, "Russian Patriarch Kirill Says Dying in Ukraine 'Washes Away All Sins,'" *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, September 26, 2022, www.rferl.org/a/russia-patriarch-kirill-dying-ukraine-sins/32052380.html.

⁴⁵⁴ The English translation by K. Benoist and published by the far-right Orthodox press, Taxiarch, is cited throughout. The German and Serbian translations are likewise published by Orthodox presses. Ivan Il'in, *Über den Gewaltsamen Widerstand Gegen das Böse* (Wachtendonk: Edition Hagia Sophia, 2018); Ivan Iljin, *O Suprotstavljanju Zlu Silom* (Belgrade: Logos, 2012).

⁴⁵⁵ I have been able to identify a summary of Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* on a Russian site that also provides translations of the summary: (Russian) <https://buhconsul.ru/o-neprotivlenii-zlu-nasiliem-ilin-zlo-nasilie-ilin-nravstvennyi/>; (English) <https://buhconsul.ru/en/o-neprotivlenii-zlu-nasiliem-ilin-zlo-nasilie-ilin->

In the section that follows, I compare Ilyin's argument in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* to the aforementioned paradigmatic example of just war theology, that of Augustine of Hippo. Following that, I demonstrate that Ilyin's particular conception of the doctrine combines a notion of just warfare with holy war and spiritual warfare. Simply revealing the heterodoxy (or would-be heresy) of Ilyin's argument relative to teachings and practices of Catholicism, Protestantism, or even canonical Eastern Orthodoxy, is not the ultimate goal of my analysis. Nevertheless, a comparative approach not only reveals how Ilyin weaponizes religion (or at least religiosity), but it also has the effect of refuting any claims of a Russian particularism to his argument, which is neither novel nor, as it turns out, especially Russian.

The last part of the chapter recapitulates recent discussions of Ilyin's influence in contemporary Russian politics. Little of the recent discussion of Ilyin's political influence addresses *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, despite its being his most popular work. Moreover, few of the scholars of Ilyin's thought have considered the text as an example of a Western theological doctrine of just war, nor have they explored the implications of such a reading. Public and international affairs scholar Paul Robinson offers a notable early exception.⁴⁵⁶ However, Robinson's intervention suffers from the fatal flaw that it compares Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* to the just war theory of Thomas Aquinas,⁴⁵⁷ apparently failing to recognize how much Aquinas departs from Augustine on the subject. In demonstrating that Ilyin differs significantly from Aquinas, Robinson erroneously concludes that Ilyin's approach is uniquely Russian rather than simply not Thomist.⁴⁵⁸ Notwithstanding, the larger analytical framework of just-war theology in Russian political thought reveals gaps both in recent political punditry and existing scholarship on Ilyin's text. In other words, I contend that most interested parties have been asking the wrong questions. For this reason, I have placed the literature review *after* the initial analysis.

Un-Orthodox Just War

nravstvennyi/ (German) <https://buhconsul.ru/de/o-neprotivlenii-zlu-nasiliem-ilin-zlo-nasilie-ilin-nravstvennyi/>; (Georgian) <https://buhconsul.ru/ka/o-neprotivlenii-zlu-nasiliem-ilin-zlo-nasilie-ilin-nravstvennyi/>; (Romanian) <https://buhconsul.ru/ro/o-neprotivlenii-zlu-nasiliem-ilin-zlo-nasilie-ilin-nravstvennyi/>. I have also found what appears to be much of the same text translated into French on another Russian site: <https://optolov.ru/fr/walls-and-wall-covering/ilin-o-soprotivlenii-zlu-siloi-i-a-ilin-o-probleme.html>.

⁴⁵⁶ Robinson's article was published in 2003—long before the Russian war in Ukraine and, indeed, even before the concerted efforts of far-right Russian intellectuals to rehabilitate Ilyin, which began around 2006.

⁴⁵⁷ Paul Robinson, "On Resistance to Evil by Force: Ivan Il'in and the Necessity of War," *Journal of Military Ethics* vol. 2, no. 2 (2003), 146–147.

⁴⁵⁸ Robinson plainly states, "Il'in's work belongs to a different tradition from that of Western just war theory." See Robinson, "Ivan Il'in and the Necessity of War," 146.

Generally, the concept of just war (*bellum iustum*) consists of two distinct parts: the right to wage war (*ius ad bellum*) and right or justice in war (*ius in bello*). The latter concerns conduct once combat has begun. Among other things, a war—if it is to be just—can only be waged by someone with the legitimate authority (*auctoritas*) to do so. Insofar as such authority derives either from the transcendent (as with divine right) or the immanent (as with the consent of the governed), theories of just war may be said to be either theological or secular. Thus, although not all theories of just war are necessarily theological, Ilyin's, which is grounded in an idea of spirituality, is necessarily so.

In presenting a theological argument rather than a secular one, Ilyin circumvents two major logical problems regarding the authority of the Russian Whites to wage a new war against the Bolsheviks after the final defeat of the White Army in Yakutia in 1923. The first of these problems concerns the paradox of authorizing a war to restore an absolute monarchy without the authority of an absolute monarch in a polity that had overwhelmingly rejected the monarchy as an institution. Tsar Nicholas II had been dead for about five years; the White Army had been routed; and the nobility along with their supporters were scattered across Europe and the United States. The imperial line of succession was broken, and any merely human (re)installation of an autocratic tsar would de facto concede the point of opponents of absolute (that is, divinely ordained) monarchy, who advocated some degree of popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, as a ROVS ideologue, Ilyin needed to rally waning support for the monarchy by at least implying the possibility of overthrowing the Bolsheviks—the thinly-veiled practical purpose of ROVS.

This epistemological dimension of Ilyin's argument is anything but trivial. The exiles and émigrés for whom he was writing were divided over precisely this issue—the nature and source of the authority (*auctoritas*) to govern with coercive force, including to wage war. Not everyone who opposed the Bolsheviks supported an autocracy, and of those who did, not all supported the same would-be autocrat. On the one hand, there were exiled Mensheviks and constitutional monarchists who formed part of the de facto anti-Bolshevik coalition.⁴⁵⁹ They were no doubt relatively few in number compared to the absolute monarchists. Yet it was impossible to know how few, and a declaration of war in the name of an autocratic tsar would have alienated these much-needed co-belligerents. On the other hand, although most of the exiled and émigré forces supported the restoration of an absolute monarchy, there were in fact two competing claimants to the imperial throne. There was Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich (1876–1938), who was the first cousin of the assassinated Tsar Nicholas II, and Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich (1856–1928), who was the late tsar's first cousin once removed. Both of the Grand Dukes enjoyed significant support among the White émigrés, but Kirill

⁴⁵⁹ For example, Baron Ludwig von Knorring, who led the White émigré community in Baden-Baden, Germany, favored a constitutional monarchy for Russia. See Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917–1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 2005), 156, 176.

Vladimirovich seemed to be the favorite in terms of his sheer number of supporters. Then again, ROVS, which was the largest organization of the exiled White military, backed Nikolai Nikolaevich.

The second logical problem concerning the authority of the Russian Whites to wage war against the Bolsheviks is related to the first. As explained above, Ilyin could not logically rely on *human* authority other than that of a reigning autocratic tsar for his call to arms in *On Resistance to Evil by Force*; to do so would be tantamount to admitting the validity of human authority and of at least some degree of self-governance. The difference between various types of representative government is a difference of degree, but the difference between autocracy and any sort of representative government is a difference of kind. For this reason, while Ilyin could not derive the requisite authority for the use of coercive force top-down from a dead tsar or a defunct monarchy, neither could he yield any further ground to bottom-up theories of governance in which the authority to use coercive force and wage war is derived from the consent of the governed or any portion thereof.

At the very least, Ilyin needed to prevent further damage to the influence of the imperial Orthodox epistemology and to contain the damage that had already been done. The damage, however, was extensive. Before Tsar Nicholas II was executed, he had abdicated the throne. Moreover, his brother, Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, had refused to succeed him unless the people were permitted to vote for the continuation of the monarchy or the establishment of a republic, which never happened. Thus, not only did those actions leave Russia without a tsar and break the line of imperial succession, they also necessarily cast doubt on both absolute monarchy as a form of government and the divinely ordained status of the nobility, of which Ilyin himself was a member.

In merely proposing to put the future of Russia to a popular vote, Grand Duke Michael had already conceded the validity of some form of popular sovereignty—if only inadvertently. Rather than insisting on the will of God and his divine right, Michael Alexandrovich had offered to let the people determine the fate of Russia, the monarchy and, by extension, the privilege of the nobility. In simple terms, then, the monarchist Russian Whites for whom Ilyin was writing found themselves in an ideological catch twenty-two. According to the very form of government they sought to restore, no justification for the restoration of an absolute monarchy would suffice short of divine revelation. By framing his justification of coercive force in terms of resistance to ontic evil (e.g., in and through the Bolsheviks), Ilyin is able to rely—again, rhetorically—on *divine* sovereignty, and thus, the lack of a tsar, who himself rules only by divine right, does not affect Ilyin's justification of the use of coercive force. As mentioned above, Ilyin shares this reliance on divine authority with Pope Urban II and his "*Deus vult!*" justification for the European Crusades.

As a part of Ilyin's rhetorical strategy, he carefully avoids direct reference to war as such in his discussion of the "resistance to evil by force" until late in the text, where he finally openly acknowledges the practical application of his argument in the context of war and begins to refer to "resistance to evil by force *and the sword.*" His reasons for initially avoiding discussion of

“war” are entirely pragmatic: in proceeding this way, Ilyin appears to arrive at the implications of some greater truth rather than seeking to authorize war without the authority of a divinely-ordained monarch.

Conveniently for Ilyin, this workaround also redirects doubts about the validity of authority to wage war onto the Bolsheviks. Since theologies of just war assert rather than argue the authority of the monarchy to rule and wage war as an aspect of its divine mandate, no rebellion of the non-noble classes *against* the aristocracy (or the Church) could ever be “just,” because it would contravene divine order—natural law. The lower classes are by nature not divinely authorized to revolt. Thus, by doubling down on the imperial Orthodox worldview, Ilyin epistemologically pre-empts any argument for the validity of the Bolshevik Revolution as a popular uprising against the monarchy or the Russian Orthodox theology that supports it. In other words, he does not even address issues of popular sovereignty (or a dictatorship of the proletariat), because these concepts are nonsensical within the paradigm he asserts. In addition, his argument strategy also mitigates the problem of justifying a *new* war against the Red Army by implicitly denying the validity of the Bolsheviks’ Revolution against the monarchy in the first place.

Epistemological Propaganda

The execution of the tsar and the concessions of his brother, Grand Duke Michael (no doubt among other similar actions), weakened the idealist position of the monarchy and the Church in their epistemological battle royale against the materialist ontology of the Marxist Bolsheviks. While Ilyin was obviously concerned with defeating the Bolsheviks militarily, he was also keenly aware of the need to affirm and reinforce popular belief in an Orthodox-monarchist cosmology. He recognized that without its restoration, a White military victory would be of little lasting value.

In addition to presenting a theology of just war, *On Resistance to Evil by Force* thus also represents Ilyin’s effort to unring the bell of popular sovereignty. In his attempt to accomplish this task, he forces a strict dichotomy. Yet the either-or that Ilyin presents is not between absolute monarchy and popular sovereignty, but rather between ontic good and evil—between divine order and diabolical ruination. He presents the validity of the monarchy and the status of the nobility as consequent to, but inextricable from, the good, just as he clearly implies that their rejection betokens evil. In this way, Ilyin leverages his readers’ religious belief against any creeping doubts they might have in the White cause or the possibility of its success: either choose God and embrace the pre-revolutionary imperial social order as the good; or reject God’s will, embrace Satan, and declare yourself an enemy the worldly forces (that is, ROVS) that uphold God’s righteousness.

Part of the cunning of Ilyin’s argument is that it denies the possibility of pacifism or non-participation by excluding any third option. Ilyin defines evil not only as resistance to the White cause but as any failure to actively support it. The assumed metaphysics of his argument inculcate the Bolsheviks by negating the possibility of popular sovereignty, and his

theodicy—his explanation of the problem of evil—makes enemies of any of the exiled Whites who, three years after the end of the Russian Civil War, may have been tempted to abandon the monarchist cause and get on with their new lives.⁴⁶⁰ Having thus framed the conflict as an inescapable war—an immanentized eschaton—with a zero sum, Ilyin proceeds to offer a theology of just war.

On Resistance to Evil by Force as Augustinian Doctrine of Just War

I now compare *On Resistance to Evil by Force* to the just war theology of Late Antique Catholic theologian Augustine of Hippo (354–430) in order to demonstrate that Ilyin’s text amounts to little more than a thinly-veiled presentation of Augustine’s doctrine of just war. The reason for my specific methodological gambit is that there is no scholarly consensus on a generic definition of just war, and any comparison is therefore necessarily particular. As mentioned above, doctrines of just war need not necessarily be theological, and, of those that are, not all are necessarily Augustinian in their argumentation. Yet Ilyin’s is. The significance of this finding lies partly in the fact that Ilyin’s champions and apologists tend to present his thought as innovative, uniquely Russian, and Orthodox. Obviously, to the extent that Ilyin’s argument is Augustinian, it is none of these. Yet it also lies partly in the fact that Augustine’s doctrine of just war provides for no real distinction between just war and holy war—an important distinction to which I return.

⁴⁶⁰ Ilyin is clear that giving up on the cause is tantamount to surrendering to evil. See, for example, p. 8, where he explains:

This is the spiritual law: the non-resistor to evil is *absorbed* by it and becomes *possessed*. For “evil” is not an empty word, not an abstract concept, not a mere logical possibility and not a “result of subject evaluation.” Evil is first and foremost the *spiritual inclination* of man, inherent in each of us, as if for some, living within us there is a *passionate desire* to unbridle the beast inside, a gravitation that always strives to expand its field and to overtake us completely. Encountering refusals and prohibitions, encountering persistent restraints that support the spiritual and moral facets of personal and social life, it seeks to seep through these obstacles, lull vigilance of conscience and sense of justice, weaken the power of shame and disgust, to adopt acceptable appearance, and if possible, to then shatter and disintegrate these living facets, these nascent forms of the individual spirit, and as it were, to topple and rend asunder the strong-willed walls of the individual Kremlin.”

[Emphasis in original].

The individual bases of comparison in the analysis that follows are drawn from the work of the late John P. Langan, SJ, a Jesuit scholar and Georgetown University professor. Langan was a highly-regarded and widely-published expert on the Catholic Church's teachings regarding just war and Christian ethics.⁴⁶¹ As Langan explains, most of Augustine's thoughts on just war are laid out in his *Contra Faustum* (c. 400). However, Langan also draws critical elements from two important letters that Augustine later wrote in response to concerns subsequently raised by Roman officials in Africa. The first is Letter 138, written in 412 CE to the tribune Marcellinus of Carthage. The second is Letter 189, to Boniface, the governor of Africa, which dates from 418 CE. Marcellinus wrote to Augustine with a problem. He described a pagan arguing that Christian "preaching and doctrine were not adaptable to the customs of the state," and making references to Christian teachings about "not returning evil for evil and about turning the other cheek."⁴⁶² "Turning the other cheek," of course, is a reference to the famous Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew.⁴⁶³

Significantly, the pacifist problem of "turning the other cheek," which Marcellinus brings to Augustine's attention, is the same problem that Tolstoy focuses on in *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*—the text to which Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* ostensibly responds. This commonality allows Ilyin to reference Tolstoy rather than Marcellinus and Augustine, thus further obscuring his debt to the Catholic theologian. Yet whereas Augustine addresses Jesus' apparent call to pacifism only a decade after the former's initial articulation of just war theology in *Contra Faustum*, Ilyin uses Tolstoy's concern with this part of the Sermon on the Mount as a means of taking up the apparent contradiction between Christianity and coercive force from the very beginning of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*.

Much of what is unique about my intervention is my departure from the main current of scholarly analyses of *On Resistance to Evil by Force* as an actual good-faith response to Tolstoy's *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*. Many scholars—though certainly not all—have more or less taken Ilyin at face value in his claim to be in a dialog with Tolstoy. I contend that these scholars have failed to give sufficient consideration to the context and timing of Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force* in their analyses. Not only had Tolstoy been more than ten years dead and the broader controversy about his pacifist teachings long since died down by the time Ilyin published *On Resistance to Evil by Force*,⁴⁶⁴ but the latter's alleged response to Tolstoy came

⁴⁶¹ Pat Marrin et al., "Father John Langan, Writer, Speaker on Just-War Tradition, Dies at 79," *National Catholic Reporter*, March 30, 2020, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/father-john-langan-writer-speaker-just-war-tradition-dies-79>.

⁴⁶² John Langan, "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* vol. 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1984), pp. 24.

⁴⁶³ The verses referenced are Matthew 5:38–42. (See passage cited in the text related to note 42, below.)

⁴⁶⁴ Nikolai Berdyaev responded to Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, noting that, "Ilyin says many things about Tolstoy that are undoubtedly true, but they are not

on the heels of the final White Army defeat by the Bolsheviks and within a year of Ilyin's own involvement with the largest organization of the exiled White military as an ideologue. And while a few scholars have been suspicious of the context and timing of Ilyin's ruminations on so-called anti-pacifism, to the best of my knowledge, none has yet proposed a reading of *On Resistance to Evil by Force* according to which Ilyin treats Tolstoy's objections to coercive force as a proxy for those of Marcellinus' anonymous fifth-century pagan in what is little more than a rehearsal of Augustine's doctrine of just war. I proceed now to that comparison.

I. The first of Langan's elements is "a conception of war as punitive rather than defensive."⁴⁶⁵ He offers the following from Augustine's *Contra Faustum* to illustrate: "He whose freedom to do wrong is taken away suffers a useful form of restraint, since nothing is more unfortunate than the good fortune of sinners, who grow bold by not being punished—a penalty in itself—and whose evil will is strengthened by the enemy within."⁴⁶⁶ Here, Augustine's "punitive conception of war" could scarcely be clearer, yet his reasoning is also didactic insofar as he describes removing the freedom to do wrong as "useful" to sinners.⁴⁶⁷ Indeed, the logic of this first element closely follows that of Proverbs 13:24: "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them."

Ilyin's justification of coercive force is likewise punitive-didactic. Not as pithy as Augustine, much less Proverbs, he nevertheless argues that the purpose of physical compulsion is:

not to loosen the will but to guide its initiative in the right direction; not to damage or suppress clarity, but to prevent the outward rampage of blindness, paving the way for the discovery of the inner eye and, perhaps for its epiphany. Physical compulsion of course cannot by itself bring about clarity, but, for example, the isolation of the unbridled person, forcing him to cease the external manifesting of his evil inclinations and passions,

new and have long been said by V. Solovyov and others. In particular, the author of these lines criticized Tolstoy extensively and used arguments which I. Ilyin now reproduces as well. But Tolstoyism does not play any role in our days, it does not own the souls of modern people and does not direct their lives. The whole character of our epoch is quite anti-Tolstoyan, and few people today doubt that resistance to evil by force and even violence is justified." See Nikolai Berdyaev, "The Nightmare of an Evil Good," *Vikiteka*, January 12, 2019, "Koshmar zlogo dobra. O knige I. Il'ina 'O soprotivlenii zlu siloyu.'" *Put'* 4 (1926) 176-82. [ru.wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D1%88%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80_%D0%B7%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0_\(%D0%91%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%B5%D0%B2\)](http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D1%88%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80_%D0%B7%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0_(%D0%91%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%B5%D0%B2)).

⁴⁶⁵ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, as quoted in Langan, "Elements," 24.

⁴⁶⁶ Langan, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Langan also notes that "Augustine interprets war along lines inspired by the Old Testament as both an element in religious pedagogy and an exercise of divine power and judgment." Langan, 22.

encourages him to concentrate on his internal state in which his soul can and should find favorable circumstances to burn out and be transformed: for many people, being deprived of freedom of external fantasies is the first condition for the acquisition of inner freedom, that is, for spiritual catharsis, vision and repentance.⁴⁶⁸

Thus, for both Augustine and Ilyin, the justification of coercive force—including war—is grounded not in the defense of self nor even in the defense of an existing social order, but in the imposition and maintenance of a natural (meaning divinely-ordained) moral order. Consequently, for both Augustine and Ilyin, challenges to that order define evil.

II. Langan's second element pertains to the idea of evil, though it serves primarily to distance the violence (that is, coercive force) that challenges moral order from the violence that establishes and maintains it. He describes this element as "an assessment of the evil of war in terms of the moral evil of certain attitudes and desires rather than in terms of damage to premoral interests and values or in terms of actions wrong in themselves or by reason of their consequences."⁴⁶⁹ Again, Langan illustrates with a quote from *Contra Faustum*:

What is the evil in War? Is it the death of some who will soon die in any case, that others may live in peaceful subjection? This is mere cowardly dislike, not any religious feeling. The real evils in war are love of violence (*nocendi cupiditas*), revengeful cruelty (*ulciscendi crudelitas*), fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power (*libido dominandi*) and such like.⁴⁷⁰

By locating the evil of war in inner motivations for violence rather than in the act itself, Augustine is able to permit the same coercive acts in the enforcement of moral order that he would punish in threats to it. The result is the double standard: *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*. ("What is permissible for Jove, is not permitted to cattle.")

Ilyin continues to follow Augustine's logic. In this element, however, he hides the similarity of his argument behind a distinction without a difference. Whereas Augustine acknowledges "violence" as a commonality of both just and unjust war, Ilyin argues that, when done out of love,⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁸ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 40.

⁴⁶⁹ Langan, "Elements," 24.

⁴⁷⁰ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, as quoted in Langan, "Elements," 21.

⁴⁷¹ See, for example, Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 41: "Yes, physical suppression deprives a person of pleasure and causes suffering; but the true educator knows that love for the educated person should not in any way be expressed by bringing him pleasure and in cautiously protecting him from suffering."

physical coercion—however painful—is categorically different from “violence” as such. Thus, he insists:

Against “violence” we should protest, it must be fought; in any case a person who has been subjected to violence is offended, oppressed and deserving of sympathy and help. ... To prove the “permissibility” or “legitimacy” of violence means to prove the “permissibility of the impermissible” or the “legitimacy of the illegitimate.”⁴⁷²

So crucial is it to Ilyin’s argument that his reader accept and adopt his terms that he continues, “whether effectively, spiritually and logically proven or not, to make such claims [i.e., that “violence” may be justified] immediately turns out to be emotionally unacceptable and vitally contentious: the wrong term splits the soul and obscures its clarity.”⁴⁷³

In order to spare his reader the unpleasantness of a cleft soul, Ilyin proposes “to reserve the term ‘violence’ for referring to all cases of *reprehensible inducement* coming from an evil soul or a spiteful direction, and to establish other terms to denote a non-objectionable inducement originating from a benevolent soul or compelling towards good.”⁴⁷⁴ For Ilyin, only unjustified violence can be “violence,” properly speaking; the paradoxical notion of justified violence, on the other hand, is better described as “mental compulsion,” “physical compulsion,” or “suppression.”⁴⁷⁵ As Ilyin would have it, then, what is permissible for Jove and what is not permitted to cattle are—conveniently—two fundamentally different things. It should be noted that, in his effort to force this distinction, he was no more convincing then than now. In an open response to *On Resistance to Evil by Force* entitled “The Nightmare of an Evil Good” (1926), Nikolai Berdyaev remarked, “The subtle distinctions [Ilyin] makes between violence and coercion are casuistry and sophistry of the lawyer.”⁴⁷⁶

Ilyin’s insistence that justified violence be called something other than “violence” represents one of only a very few of his original contributions to the Augustinian formulation of just war doctrine in *On Resistance to Evil by Force*. It is philosophically inconsequential, but the strategic purpose of this alteration is at least twofold. First, it obscures Ilyin’s debt to Augustine. Second, by dissociating what he calls “non-objectionable inducement” from violence, he further separates it from any discussion of war and thereby disguises his project of proposing an extra-canonical doctrine of just war.

III. Langan describes the third element of Augustine’s doctrine of just war as “a search for appropriate authorization, either divine or human, for the use of violence.”⁴⁷⁷ He cites the following from *Contra Faustum*:

⁴⁷² Ilyin, 25.

⁴⁷³ Ilyin, 25, [quotation marks in original].

⁴⁷⁴ Ilyin, 25, [Emphasis in original].

⁴⁷⁵ Ilyin, 25.

⁴⁷⁶ Berdyaev, “The Nightmare of an Evil Good,” 1926.

⁴⁷⁷ Langan, “Elements,” 23.

A great deal depends on the causes for which men undertake wars, and on the authority they have for doing so: for the natural order which seeks the peace of mankind ordains that the monarch should have the power of undertaking war if he thinks it advisable, and that the soldiers should perform their military duties on behalf of the peace and safety of the community.⁴⁷⁸

Thus, Augustine looks to “natural order” as the source of authority for imposing and maintaining moral order by means of coercive force.

Of course, for Augustine, only such order as reflects the will of God is “natural.” Moreover, as the above quote implies, this natural order includes social and political hierarchies—God has ordained that monarchs give orders and that soldiers obey them. Consequently, as Langan notes, Augustine’s soldier is authorized to take part in hostilities even when his orders come from “an ungodly king” or involve an “unrighteous command,” and he is left innocent “because his position makes obedience a duty.”⁴⁷⁹

Ilyin’s search for appropriate authorization for the use of violence, like his distinction between violence and “non-objectionable inducement,” is terminologically obscured. He explains that not only does resistance to evil by force not constitute “violence,” but also that it would be wrong to think of such forceful resistance as “just.” Rather, he insists, it is a matter of obligation. He writes:

the man who fights villains must *see for himself*, perceive and evaluate all the conditions of the struggle, understanding them with his human mind and making decisions with his human will; he must understand that he is *forced* to resort to these means precisely because he himself is not God, but only a limited yet devoted *servant* of God, and therefore he must perform this necessity with extreme human understanding and discretion. And then he will see that these unjust means are for him not simply “allowed,” and are certainly not “sanctified,” but are *mandatory in all their unrighteousness*.⁴⁸⁰

Effectively, Ilyin replaces the criterion of justification with obligation. In this way, he once again strives to distance his call to arms from Augustine’s just war theology through a manipulation of his terms. He rhetorically negates both the terms “violence” (and by extension, war) and “just” by replacing them with “inducement” and “mandatory.” Yet the purpose of this rhetorical sleight of hand is to obfuscate any basis for comparison between his argument and Augustine’s formulation of just war, which, as explained in the introduction, is not acknowledged in canonical Orthodox

⁴⁷⁸ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, as quoted in Langan, 24.

⁴⁷⁹ Langan, 23.

⁴⁸⁰ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 184–185, all italics in original.

theology. However, not only is there ultimately no appreciable difference between Augustine's "violence" and Ilyin's "coercion," but also, as I will show, Ilyin's "unjust" (or "unrighteous") is not in fact the corollary opposite to Augustine's "just." Thus, Ilyin does not actually negate Augustine's second term, but merely introduces an additional (yet meaningless) distinction.

For Augustine, the significance of just war (that is, justified violence) is bound up with the idea of moral culpability (that is, sin) and salvation. When violence is justified, its commission does not constitute sin. Crucially, the "unjust means" to which Ilyin refers do not amount to sin either. Augustine's obedient soldier is innocent by virtue of the justness of his actions, yet Ilyin's sword bearer is likewise innocent despite the unjustness of his. In the same way that Augustine argues that violence may be justified in the maintenance of divinely instituted moral order, Ilyin argues that although acts of non-objectionable inducement may be unjust and unrighteous, they are nevertheless sometimes mandatory in the voluntary service of God. Thus, Ilyin's use of "unjust" is not the corollary opposite of Augustine's "just," and in fact appears to be semantically empty. The difference between their two arguments lies in Ilyin's terms, not his ideas.

IV. The fourth element of Augustine's just war is "a divided epistemological stance that includes certainty with regard to the superiority of spiritual goods and uncertainty about the ultimate desirability of other events and experiences and their connection with the higher spiritual goods."⁴⁸¹ Citing once again from *Contra Faustum*, Langan adduces the following:

The patriarchs and prophets, then, have a kingdom in this world, to show that these kingdoms, too, are given and taken away by God: the apostles and martyrs had no kingdom here, to show the superior desirableness of the kingdom of heaven.⁴⁸²

Augustine has a particular reason for approaching the subject in this way. Like Ilyin, he is confronted with the Gospel account of the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, which he cannot directly contradict.

⁴⁸¹ Langan, "Elements," 24. The logic of enduring trials in this life for the rewards of the next can be found in numerous Bible verses, for example Matthew 5:10–12: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Consider also 1 Peter 1:24–25 (cf. Isaiah 40:8): "For, all people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word that was preached to you."

⁴⁸² Langan, "Elements," 23.

Indeed, the verses in Matthew 5:38–42, part of the famous Sermon on the Mount, appear very much to be Jesus' admonition to non-resistance to evil wherein "evil" is plainly understood as coercive force:

You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.⁴⁸³

Thus, again, as the Roman tribune Marcellinus points out to Augustine in Letter 138, the words of Jesus—understood literally—are at odds with the practical needs of the empire. Augustine's solution to this conundrum is to reframe non-resistance as a means of overcoming evil—as a form of resistance. He explains:

Evil is overcome by good in the evil man, and the man is set free, not from an exterior foreign evil, but from an interior, personal one, by which he is more grievously and ruinously laid waste than he would be by the inhumanity of any enemy from without. Therefore, he overcomes evil by good who suffers the loss of temporal goods with patience, in order to show how far these goods are to be despised for the sake of faith and justice.⁴⁸⁴

The "divided epistemological stance" in Augustine's thinking is a kind of non-attachment to material good in this world (such as one's possessions, and indeed, one's own body) for the sake of the spiritual good of the next. In other words, the preservation of one's material possessions and physical safety does not justify killing (e.g., outside of war), but neither does it offer a valid reason not to fight in a just war. Moreover, Augustine instrumentalizes this non-attachment when he writes, "*he overcomes evil by good* who suffers the loss of temporal goods with patience" (emphasis added). By defining good and evil in such terms, on the one hand, Augustine asserts the sanctity of life over possessions; on the other, he also effectively removes any tangible criteria for internal rebellion from below.

Ilyin's reasoning likewise includes a divided epistemological stance that asserts the superiority of spiritual goods over the physical. Crucially, however, whereas for Augustine the spiritual and the physical seem to be entirely separate, Ilyin uses this reasoning to imbue *certain* physical goods and experiences with transcendent value. For example, he writes:

The beginning of the spirit is the beginning of a *substantive choice* and a *religious devotion*. And this spiritual force of religious devotion, which has chosen

⁴⁸³ Matthew 5:38–42 (see also text related to note 22, above).

⁴⁸⁴ Langan, "Elements," 24.

the Divine and clings to Him, inspires a spiritual love in one's attitude to everything: to God, to the Church, to the homeland, to the Tsar, to his people, to his material and personal altars, to his family, and to his neighbor.⁴⁸⁵

Thus, Ilyin uses the same divided epistemology (that is, the respective values of spiritual and material goods) so as to prescriptively reorder aspects of material life according to their spiritual value. For Ilyin, some material things also have superior spiritual value.

Indeed, Ilyin's instrumentalization of Augustine's "divided epistemological stance" is so flagrant, so cynical, and so central to the purpose of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, that I permit myself the following lengthy quotation in order to illustrate this:

Such love rebuilds in the soul an entire worldview and the relations which pertain to all the value in the world. Due to this, all dimensions are now considered in a new and different way, and everything is henceforth determined by Divinity and His sanctifying presence. Thus the typical, religiously blind opinion believes that the useful is above the sacred, that a man is above a thing, and that many people are above one person; it is "convinced" that all men are "equal," that every person has the right to life and that the last word always belongs to "humanity" ... However, one who embodies spiritual love sees and regards all of these things completely differently. For him, the sacred is always above the useful: earthly harm is not certain to be terrible and human benefit is not always attractive. He knows "things" that are higher than a person ... Spiritual love knows that people are not equal ... It also knows that every man must earn and justify his right to life, that there are people who are better off not having been born, and that there are others who are better off being killed than allowed to do evil (Matthew 18.6; Mark 9.42; Luke 17.1–2). Spiritual love ... does not measure the improvement of human life by the contentment of individual people or the happiness of the human mass ... Its vision has long revealed to it why illness may be better than health, submission better than power, poverty may be better than wealth. And it is the power of this vision that has strengthened many in the noble conviction that noble death is always better than shameful life, and that each person defines himself in the face of God precisely at the moment in which he voluntarily chooses death.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 119, [emphasis in original].

⁴⁸⁶ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 119–120.

Matthew 18:6 "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their

Thus, once again, Ilyin follows the logic of Augustine's argument. In this case, however, he deploys it not to juxtapose the spiritual and the material with a preference for the spiritual, but rather to imbue certain material things with spiritual value and thus incite a religious war over an earthly kingdom.

V. The fifth element of Augustine's just war theology is identified as "a willingness to interpret evangelical norms in terms of inner attitudes rather than overt actions."⁴⁸⁷ Langan takes this element, in which Augustine clearly references the Sermon on the Mount, almost verbatim from *Contra Faustum*:

If it is supposed that God could not enjoin warfare, because in after times it was said by the Lord Jesus Christ, "I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but if any one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also," the answer is, that what is here required is not a bodily action, but an inward disposition.⁴⁸⁸

Langan recognizes that Augustine has spiritualized the command not to resist aggression. Yet he also claims that "we would be mistaken if we took this spiritualization as a mere evacuation of the demanding content of the Gospel or as a veil behind which Christians would be free to assert themselves or to pursue their own selfish desires."⁴⁸⁹

Regardless of whether Augustine intended to create such a veil, or whether, as Langan argues, it is part of his "effort to seek our happiness in another life and another kingdom,"⁴⁹⁰ Ilyin, for his part, deploys this element of just war theology selfishly and cynically in his presentation of Augustine's argument. Almost from the first page of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, Ilyin sets about discrediting any literal reading of the Gospel call to non-resistance to evil with the same "willingness to interpret evangelical norms in terms of inner attitudes rather than overt actions" that is so explicit in Augustine. In fact, Ilyin claims that Tolstoy himself makes the same internal/external distinction—that neither Tolstoy nor his followers actually advocated *internal* non-resistance to evil. This must be the case, he insists, since any literal interpretation of the gospel verses in question

neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Mark 9:42 "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea."

Luke 17:1–2 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble."

⁴⁸⁷ Langan, "Elements," 24.

⁴⁸⁸ Langan, 23.

⁴⁸⁹ Langan, 23.

⁴⁹⁰ Langan, 23.

would require “accepting evil: letting it in and giving it freedom, scope and power,”⁴⁹¹ and, returning to the point a few pages later, he doubles down, “the non-resistor to evil is *absorbed* by it and becomes *possessed*.”⁴⁹²

What Tolstoy actually advocates, Ilyin concludes, is the complete internalization of one’s resistance. The “ ‘non-resistance,’ about which Tolstoy and his followers write and speak does not mean internal surrender to evil; on the contrary, it is a *special kind of resistance*, i.e., repudiation, condemnation, rejection, and opposition. Their ‘non-resistance’ means resistance and struggle, however, only by certain favored means.”⁴⁹³ With that, Ilyin resolves that not even Tolstoy advocates *literal* non-resistance to evil and proceeds to reframe (that is, internalize) the question of nonresistance as one of a “favored means” of resistance rather than a question of literal pacifism.

Ilyin not only internalizes resistance to evil, but also evil itself. He explains, “So, first of all, ‘evil,’ about the resistance to which we are speaking here, is an evil not external, but *internal*.”⁴⁹⁴ Thus, he continues:

Evil begins where the *person* begins, and moreover it is not in the human body in all its states and manifestations *as such*, but the human *psychospiritual world*. No external state of the human body in itself, no external “act” of the person in itself (i.e., taken and discussed separately, detached from the psychospiritual state concealed behind it or giving rise to it) can be either good or evil.⁴⁹⁵

On this point, Ilyin directly contradicts Tolstoy’s literal reading of the Sermon on the Mount. It is a necessary part of Ilyin’s attempt to force a distinction between violence as “reprehensible inducement” and those forms of compulsion and suppression which he does not consider objectionable. This distinction allows him to achieve the same double standard that Augustine creates with his appeal to divinely-instituted “natural order” (that is, the abovementioned *Quod licet Jovi ...*). Just as for Augustine, violence in the maintenance of natural order is justified, for Ilyin, physical “compulsion and suppression” carried out in the interest of “spirituality” do not constitute “violence.” Thus, for both, coercive force in the interest of the author’s favored religious worldview is divinely sanctioned, while coercive force against that same order is not.

The clearest articulation of Ilyin’s position comes at the end of the sixth chapter, where he explains:

It is not compulsion or suppression which are anti-spiritual and contrary to love, but *vicious abuse*, and in this a person is always wrong; in some sense, is mad, in

⁴⁹¹ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 7, [emphasis in original].

⁴⁹² Ilyin, 11, [emphasis in original].

⁴⁹³ Ilyin, 12.

⁴⁹⁴ Ilyin, 13, [emphasis in original].

⁴⁹⁵ Ilyin, 13–14, [emphasis in original].

some sense, is the realization of rage, and in some sense is guilty of having despised another's spirituality, transforming them into a means for his desire, and this injustice remains whether or not his deeds bring moral good or moral harm to his victim ... *Compulsion* directed against the villain, and *malicious violence*, to whomever it is directed, are not the same, and their confusion is baseless, unjust, biased, and blind.⁴⁹⁶

Ilyin thus distinguishes between the necessary compulsion or suppression of a villain and the anti-spiritual (that is, evil) "vicious abuse" or "malicious violence." He avoids reference to Augustine's paradigm of justification in describing the perpetrator of such "anti-spiritual" violence, suggesting instead that the perpetrator is instead morally wrong. Yet significantly, both Augustine and Ilyin find real evil in the motivations behind the perpetrator's actions.

Both Augustine and Ilyin conclude their lines of thinking—Augustine, that not all violence is unjustified, and Ilyin, that not all compulsion is violence—with the same justificatory resolution that physical coercion can have spiritual-didactic value (element I). According to Augustine:

When war is undertaken in obedience to God, who would rebuke, or humble, or crush the pride of man, it must be allowed to be a righteous war; for even the wars which arise from human passion cannot harm the eternal well-being of God, nor even hurt His saints; for in the trial of their patience, and the chastening of their spirit, and in bearing fatherly correction, they are rather benefited than injured.⁴⁹⁷

And, according to Ilyin:

Yes, physical suppression deprives a person of pleasure and causes suffering; but the true educator knows that love for the educated person should not in any way be expressed by bringing him pleasure and in cautiously protecting him from suffering. On the contrary, it is in suffering, especially when given to a person in a wise way, that the soul deepens, grows stronger and begins to truly see: and it is in the pleasures, especially when not observed wisely, that the soul surrenders to evil passions and becomes blind.⁴⁹⁸

In explaining that coercion may, under certain circumstances, be for the ultimate good of the coerced, Augustine and Ilyin both attempt to demonstrate the validity of their respective distinctions by reason of disparate effect.

⁴⁹⁶ Ilyin, 49, [emphasis in original].

⁴⁹⁷ Langan, "Elements," 22.

⁴⁹⁸ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 41.

Ilyin, however, is careful to distinguish between the dutiful and dispassionate imposition of suffering that leads to spiritual growth on the one hand, and any sadistic enjoyment of another's pain on the other, writing:

Of course, a person who is roughly moved, beaten, bound, perhaps even imprisoned for a long time, experiences unpleasant, maybe agonizing hours and days; but this does not mean that he has been accosted by another's anger, that he has become a subject of hatred and that all of this leads him to reciprocal resentment and the demise of his love. Quite the contrary, the troubles and sufferings that he endures could be inflicted upon him by a will which wishes him and others good, and can become for him the source of the greatest good in life.⁴⁹⁹

Yet once again, Ilyin arrives precisely where Augustine does in the latter's pronouncement that "the real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power and such like."⁵⁰⁰ As Langan explains, "what Augustine finds repellent in the state of war [that is, coercive violence] is its expression of human selfishness and of the disordered desires of human beings."⁵⁰¹ In other words, it is internal evil that he finds objectionable. Neither Augustine nor Ilyin leaves any room for revolutionary resistance to their respective visions of moral order. Certainly, one can see how Augustine's explicit purpose of justifying the exercise of coercive force "by the good, in order to curb licentious passions by destroying those vices which should have been rooted out and suppressed by the rightful government"⁵⁰² might appeal to Ilyin as the ROVS ideology.

VI. The sixth element Langan describes as "an assumption of general social passivity and quiescence in the decisions and moral judgments of authority."⁵⁰³ Additionally, in the concluding remarks of his article, Langan specifies that the third and sixth elements should be considered together, "since they both involve a denial of the active role of the responsible citizen in shaping defense policy and in making decisions about the use of force."⁵⁰⁴ Thus, according to Langan, Augustine assumes that people will—or at least should—accept and obey moral imperatives from a superior authority, whether human or divine. Both Augustine and Ilyin incentivize this passivity by connecting obedience to salvation.

As discussed above in element III, by transferring responsibility for violence to higher powers, Augustine is able to find the soldier who carries out an unrighteous command innocent of sin "because his position makes

⁴⁹⁹ Ilyin, 41–42.

⁵⁰⁰ Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, as quoted in Langan, "Elements," 21.

⁵⁰¹ Langan, "Elements," 22.

⁵⁰² Langan, 25.

⁵⁰³ Langan, 24.

⁵⁰⁴ Langan, 34.

obedience a duty." Similarly, Ilyin determines that "resistance to evil by force and the sword is not a sin wherever it is objectively necessary, or, what is the same, where it turns out to be the only possible, or least unrighteous outcome."⁵⁰⁵

On the surface, the element of a status or position with an inherent duty to obedience appears to be missing in Ilyin's formulation. In fact, it is not. Whereas for Augustine, it is the soldier's subordinate status in a divinely ordained natural order that requires his obedience to superior human authority, for Ilyin, it is the sword bearer's own choice between ultimate good and evil—between God and Satan—that obligates him. As he explains, "good and evil in their essential content are determined through the presence or absence of precisely these two combined attributes: *love and spiritualisation*."⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, he adds, "a person is *spiritual* insofar as he voluntarily and of his own accord turns to objective perfection, needing Him, looking for Him and loving Him, measuring life and assessing life's content by the measure of His true divinity (truth, beauty, righteousness, love, heroism)."⁵⁰⁷ In other words, it is his voluntary status as an Orthodox Christian that obligates him. Ilyin thus instrumentalizes obedience in such a way as to reinforce the pre-revolutionary autocratic Orthodox worldview—or, as I have previously described it, to attempt to "unring the bell" of popular sovereignty.

It should come as no surprise that Ilyin does not explicitly subordinate his sword bearer to the monarch since, at the time of the publication of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, there was none. Yet in laying out the only "loving and spiritualized" (or, in Augustinian terms, "naturally ordered") course of action over the course of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, Ilyin has effectively placed himself, rather than the tsar, between his "sword bearer" and God in this particular call to arms. Augustine's soldier must obey his commander; Ilyin's sword bearer must obey Ilyin.

The sword bearer's choice of Good over Evil is thus no different from that of Augustine's soldier to obey divinely-ordained natural order or to rebel against it. Ilyin's sword bearer is not obligated by the nature of his position as a soldier, but rather obligated to soldiering by the nature of his commitment to love and spiritualization: that is, to the good. Moreover, just as Augustine's soldier is sinless in his violence so long as he is obedient to his superiors, Ilyin's sword bearer is sinless in his violence so long as he is spiritual, the measure of which, it seems, is a version of the familiar "Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality." Finally, albeit in somewhat subtler terms, Ilyin openly declares his attempt to unring the bell of popular sovereignty, writing, "such [spiritual] love rebuilds in the soul an entire worldview and the relations which pertain to all the value in the world."⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 181.

⁵⁰⁶ Ilyin, 16, [emphasis in original].

⁵⁰⁷ Ilyin, 16, [emphasis in original].

⁵⁰⁸ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 119.

VII. The seventh element in Langan's analysis is an appeal to "specific New Testament texts to legitimate military service and participation in war."⁵⁰⁹ It is thus closely related to the third element. However, whereas the third deals with the authorization of coercive force (that is, violence and war), the seventh is intended to relieve Christians from the apparent call to pacifism (that is, to "turn the other cheek," as described in the Gospels of Matthew). To this end, Augustine refers to the words of John the Baptist to the soldiers in Luke 3:14,⁵¹⁰ and cites Jesus' favorable reference to the centurion in Matthew 8:5–13.⁵¹¹ Moreover, Augustine returns to this aspect of just war in his Letter 189 to Boniface (418 CE), declaring, "Do not imagine that no one can please God while he is engaged in military service."⁵¹²

Ilyin likewise appeals to "specific New Testament texts to legitimate military service and participation in war,"⁵¹³ and although his choice of scriptural authority varies from Augustine's, the difference does not demonstrate a departure from the Augustinian paradigm. Rather, it is merely a necessity of Ilyin's rhetorical strategy. As explained above, whereas Augustine argues that violence is sometimes justified, Ilyin argues that "non-objectionable inducement" is sometimes an obligation of true Christian conviction. Thus, in Augustine's choice of gospel verses, he seeks to reveal a John the Baptist and a Jesus positively disposed toward soldiers (and thus, presumably, not categorically opposed to military service), whereas Ilyin adduces verses meant to establish a category of people deserving of punishment. Ilyin thus explains:

⁵⁰⁹ Langan, "Elements," 24.

⁵¹⁰ In this context, the verse is significant because John the Baptist does not advise the soldiers of their culpability or advise them to change professions. It reads, "Then some soldiers asked [John the Baptist], 'And what should we do?' He replied, 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely — be content with your pay.' "

⁵¹¹ Langan, "Elements," 24.

Matthew 8:5–13 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment."

⁵¹² Langan, "Elements," 26.

⁵¹³ Langan, 24.

Calling on us to love our enemies, Christ meant the personal enemies of a man himself (“your,” “you”), his own haters and persecutors, whom the offended, naturally, can choose to forgive or *not* to forgive. Christ never called on us to love the enemies of *God*, to bless those who hate and trample upon all that is Divine, to assist blasphemous seducers, to kindly sympathize with the obsessive molesters of souls, to be in awe of them and to possess a strong sentiment that nobody standing in opposition should interfere with their villainy (Matthew 5.43–47; Luke 6.27–28).

The contrary is in fact true, both for such people and even for those incomparably less guilty. Christ also had fiery words of reproof (Matthew 11.21–24, 23; Mark 12.38–40; Luke 11.39–52, 13.32–35, 20.46–47, etc.) and the threat of severe retribution (Matthew 10.15, 12.9, 18.9, 24.34–35, 21.41, 22.7, 13, 24.51, 25.12, 30; Mark 8.38; Luke 19.27, 21.20–26; John 3.36), and the driving out of a scourge (Matthew 21.12; Mark 11.15; Luke 19.45; John 2.13–16) and impending *eternal* torments (Matthew 25.41, 46; John 5.29).

Therefore, a Christian who strives to be faithful to the word and spirit of his Teacher is not at all called to unnaturally force his soul to feel tenderness and affection towards the impenitent villain as such, and he cannot find in Christ’s commandments either a reason or a pretext for evading the resistance to villainy. He needs only to understand that the immediate, religiously faithful resistance to evildoers is in waging a battle against them, *not as personal enemies, but as enemies of the cause of God on earth.*⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 123–124, [emphasis in original].

Matthew 5:43–47 expands upon Jesus’ command, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.”

Luke 6:27–28, “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Matthew 11:21–24 has Jesus prophesying eternal judgement upon cities who ignore his miracles.

Matthew 23 warns of judgement upon hypocrites, teachers of the law, and Pharisees.

Mark 12:38–40 has Jesus condemning teachers of the law who live for their own public acclaim.

Luke 11:39–52 expands upon the immediately above passage in Mark.

Luke 13:32–35 shows Jesus' defiance in the face of death threats emanating from King Herod.

Luke 20:46–47 is a parallel passage with Mark 12:38–40, above.

Matthew 10:15, "Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town [that will not welcome my disciples or listen to their words]."

Matthew 18:9, "And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

Matthew 18:34–35, "In his anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Matthew 21:41, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

Matthew 22:7, 13, "The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city ... Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

Matthew 24:51, "He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 25:12, "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know [the hour of judgment].' ... And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mark 8:38, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Luke 19:27, " 'But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.' "

Luke 21:20–26 describes global conflicts and natural disasters foretelling the day of judgement.

John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them."

Matthew 21:12, Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

Mark 11:15 is a parallel passage with that in Matthew, immediately above.

Luke 19:45 is also a parallel passage with these, immediately above.

John 2:13–16 expands upon these parallel passages, immediately above.

Matthew 25:41, 46, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels' ... Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

John 5:29, "... and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."

Although they differ in the specific verses to which they appeal for authority, both Augustine and Ilyin are responding to the question of the individual soldier's (rather than the ruler's) culpability for military service and participation in war, and Ilyin appeals to scriptural authority with a barrage of citations handily exceeding Augustine's few references (see n. 72, above).

VIII. The final element of Langan's analysis of Augustine's just war theology is "an analogical conception of peace."⁵¹⁵ For Augustine, the analogy consists of the relationship between peace in this world and peace in the next; for Ilyin, it is between peace with one's personal enemies and peace with the enemies of God. For each of them, it is a question of *a kind of peace*, which is limited and must be distinguished from any totalizing, literal (as opposed to analogical) understanding (and expectation) of peace. Both Augustine and Ilyin use this analogical reasoning to arrive at a paradoxical reading of non-resistance to evil which rejects the pacifism described in the Sermon on the Mount and involves—whether justifying or necessitating—violent coercive force out of a duty to God and the state. Although Ilyin's analogy is not precisely identical to Augustine's, it is nevertheless very much an "analogical conception of peace," which he, like Augustine, uses to undermine the gospel imperative to "turn the other cheek" in such a way as to exculpate the individual soldier who must exercise violence in the interests of the state.

For this element, Langan once again cites Augustine's 418 CE Letter 189, in which the latter assures Boniface that one may indeed please God while engaged in military service. Nevertheless, according to Langan:

Augustine's pastoral concern is not to urge Christians to join in fashioning a more just order here with a correspondingly better peace, except insofar as the republic to which they belong rightly worships the true God and so possesses true virtues. Rather, he wants to keep Christians moving on to the peace of the heavenly city and to prevent them from placing their felicity in this life.⁵¹⁶

Yet as Langan also explains, for Augustine, "the peace of the heavenly city is attained not by a series of social experiments and approximations, but by the eschatological events of death, resurrection, and judgment."⁵¹⁷

For his part, Ilyin is not primarily concerned with a distinction between worldly happiness and the "peace of the heavenly city," but rather between peaceful relations with one's personal enemies and peace with "the enemies of God." Thus, Ilyin's ultimate aim diverges significantly from Augustine's (as interpreted by Langan). Unlike Augustine, Ilyin is very much urging "Christians to join in fashioning a more just order here with a

⁵¹⁵ Langan, "Elements," 19.

⁵¹⁶ Langan, 30.

⁵¹⁷ Langan, 30.

correspondingly better peace”⁵¹⁸ through coercive force. In other words, whereas Augustine’s formulation of just war *could* be interpreted as holy war, Ilyin is unambiguously advocating holy war. It should be observed, moreover, that this very aspect of just war is what inspires Ilyin’s choice of title for *On Resistance to Evil by Force*. Recognizing—as did Augustine and many others before and since—that a Christian call to war must be reconciled with the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Ilyin confronts the problem head-on in his argument:

It is in this connection that we should also understand the Gospel’s words “do not resist evil” (Matthew 5.39). The rule contained within them is clearly explained in the following way: in the sense of an *affectionate deferring of personal grievances*, as well as the generous giving up of *personal property*, and *individual services*. To interpret this call to gentleness and generosity in personal matters as a call to the inactive contemplation of violations and injustices, or the subjugation to evildoers in matters of righteousness and spirit, would be unthinkable and unnatural ... The teaching of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church, of course, advanced a completely different understanding. “God’s servants” need a sword and “do not wear it in vain” (Romans 13.4); they are a threat to the villains. And it was in the spirit of this understanding that St. Feodosy Pechorsky said: “live in peace not only with your friends, but also with your enemies; but only with your personal enemies, and not the enemies of God.”⁵¹⁹

Thus, the analogical conception of peace in Ilyin’s thinking primarily serves to identify objects of legitimate violence, despite his protestations that thinking in such terms splits the soul.

In Augustine’s thinking, on the other hand, the analogical conception of peace primarily serves to explain why violence must exist, generally—it is a theodicy that attempts to explain why one sometimes finds oneself on the receiving end of acts of violence—and how it is that internal non-resistance in fact works as a kind of resistance. For this, Langan cites Book IV of Augustine’s *City of God*. He notes how, after praising the rule of good and godly men, Augustine explains that:

the dominion of bad men is hurtful chiefly to themselves who rule, for they destroy their own souls by greater license in wickedness, while those who are put under them in service are not hurt except by their own iniquity. For to the just all the evils imposed on them by unjust rulers are not the punishment of crime, but the test of virtue.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ Langan, 30.

⁵¹⁹ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 126–127, [emphasis in original].

⁵²⁰ Langan, “Elements,” 30.

Remarking on Augustine's theodicy, Langan concedes that "it would be hard to imagine a line of thought which, while affirming the existence and the extent of injustices in society, does more to cut the nerve of revolutionary change."⁵²¹

In large part, then, the difference between Ilyin and Augustine over the question of "resistance to evil" comes down to Ilyin's flair for the dramatic. Both agree that turning the other cheek and surrendering—willingly—the shirt off one's back builds a sort of Christian character. Furthermore, they both agree that the legitimate exception to such non-resistance pertains to the enforcement of a moral order in which "the republic to which they belong rightly worships the true God and so possesses true virtues."⁵²² The only substantive difference between them is soteriological (that is, regarding salvation): whereas Augustine stresses the redemptive value of suffering in this life, Ilyin stresses the Christian "obligation" to fight the "enemies of God." Once again, Ilyin blatantly intends the more cynical and self-serving of the possible readings of Augustine, which Langan is at pains to distinguish from what he believes to be Augustine's true intention.

Non-Combatant Immunity and Conscientious Objection

After the eighth and final element, Langan adds that Augustine's theology of just war "does not include non-combatant immunity and conscientious objection."⁵²³ His concluding observation has particular bearing on the comparison of Augustine's and Ilyin's arguments: it further demonstrates the extent to which they are, in fact, the same. Beginning with conscientious objection, both Augustine and Ilyin remove its possibility by forcing the would-be combatant to choose between good and evil rather than combat and non-combat. Augustine's soldier has the choice to act in accordance with the divinely-instituted natural order (that is, to obey his superiors) or not. If he chooses rebellion, however, he is morally culpable—he is guilty of sin. Likewise, Ilyin's sword bearer may fail to (voluntarily) choose "spirituality and love" (that is, the good). Yet in so doing, he is no less guilty of choosing evil—if only tacitly. As I have previously remarked, I believe this feature of their shared argument to be crucial to understanding both the historical purpose and modern appeal of Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force*.

Langan's other observation is about noncombatant immunity, which concerns the ethics of conduct once battle has begun and is thus an aspect of right or justice in war (*ius in bello*). Significantly, he notes, "Augustine presented no clear-cut argument for the protection of the innocent, especially for the civilian innocent or noncombatant, in time of war."⁵²⁴ Langan offers four rather generous readings (that is, possible theological explanations) for this absence in Augustine's theology.⁵²⁵ However, I

⁵²¹ Augustine, *City of God*, as quoted in Langan, 30.

⁵²² Langan, 30.

⁵²³ Langan, 19.

⁵²⁴ Langan, 31.

⁵²⁵ Langan, 31–32.

propose that this lack of an articulated position on noncombatant immunity is inextricably linked to the impossibility of conscientious objection in Augustine's and Ilyin's shared framework. In their arguments, Augustine and Ilyin both stage an inescapable choice between ontic good and evil. Within this strict dichotomy, there may be noncombatants in the strictest sense, but there can be no innocent bystanders. Even noncombatants must choose sides. The failure to choose the good (whether in fighting or praying), amounts to siding with evil. Thus, for the same reason that there can be no conscientious objection to the struggle between good and evil, there can also be no true noncombatant in what amounts to spiritual warfare.

Langan does not discuss spiritual warfare, specifically, but he does note that Augustine draws a parallel between prayer and warfare in the preservation of order: "Thus some fight for you against invisible enemies by prayer, while you strive for them against visible barbarians by fighting."⁵²⁶ According to this logic, I suggest, there can be no absolute noncombatants. Augustine expects the spiritual (moral) support of noncombatants in his analogical conception of peace (see element VIII). As Langan further notes, "Augustine reminds Boniface that war is waged for the sake of peace and that he is to wage war as a peacemaker. Violence is appropriate in dealing with rebels who reject peace. War is 'the result of necessity,' and therefore 'let it be necessity, not choice, that kills your warring enemy.'"⁵²⁷ Thus, not only does Augustine effectively frame evil as the rejection of peace—the rejection of the imposition of divinely-instituted natural order—but he also shares Ilyin's framework of "necessity."

Unsurprisingly, Ilyin handles the problem of noncombatants in much the same way. From the following, it is obvious that noncombatants are acceptable collateral damage especially when they are in any way spiritually opposed to compulsion. That is, outward defiance serves as evidence of inward evil in combatants and noncombatants alike. He writes:

The lower the general spiritual quality of the compelled (e.g., the mental underdevelopment or moral stupidity of a person, his obscurity, ignorance, the frenzy of crowds, one's upbringing in the religion of cruelty and hatred, his weak legal awareness or patriotic faith in the country), the stronger the passions of a person (e.g., cases of insanity, mass psychosis) or his evil will (e.g., the ferocity of a villain), the greater the likelihood that sooner or later a critical moment may come in which all psychospiritual means are exhausted. Finally, for the more mentally helpless (e.g., the deaf and mute, the foreigner who does not speak the language, one who is deprived of gifts of speech), or the spiritually unarmed (e.g., cases of pedagogical inexperience, the unprincipled leader, a government's powerlessness in the absence of public

⁵²⁶ Augustine, *City of God*, as quoted in Langan, 26.

⁵²⁷ Langan, "Elements," 25–26.

support, integrity, or an honest press), it is more difficult to wage a struggle with purely spiritual means.⁵²⁸

Thus, finally, despite Ilyin's sustained efforts to distinguish what he presents as the false idea of just war from unjust but mandatory compulsion and suppression, he cannot help but elaborate the various circumstances in which the use of coercive force—against both combatants and noncombatants—is justified.

Summary of the Comparison

The careful comparison of Ilyin's argument in *On Resistance to Evil by Force* to Augustine's doctrine of just war reveals that although Ilyin seems to begin *On Resistance to Evil by Force* as a polemic against Leo Tolstoy's pacifist teaching, he ends up justifying acts of coercive force. Tolstoy is Ilyin's foil, not his interlocutor. Ilyin has worked backwards when compared to Augustine, but he ultimately mounts the same argument. By the end of the text, there can be no mistake that Ilyin is very much concerned with "just war," as he no longer limits his discussion to "resistance to evil by force," but refers time and again to "resistance to evil by force and the sword."

Both Augustine and Ilyin are concerned with the justification of coercive force (that is, violence) in war. However, their respective positions require them to approach the problem of just war from different perspectives. Augustine was an eminent bishop theologian of the Roman Empire, which had recently adopted Christianity as its official religion. Ilyin was a right-Hegelian philosopher and publicist who became an ideologue for ROVS and its supporters. To be sure, there is no reason not to think of Ilyin and Augustine both as ideologues—certainly with regard to just war. However, Augustine's purpose was to authorize the Roman state and exculpate individual soldiers in the practice of war, whereas Ilyin's purpose was to deauthorize the Soviet state and obligate (rather than authorize) individual soldiers (since he could not *directly* authorize the White cause as such without the absolute authority of an autocratic tsar).

Any difference between their arguments amounts to a sophistical distinction without a difference between violence and coercion (as Berdyaev noted in "The Nightmare of an Evil Good") and between justification and obligation, which, as I have shown, is no different than Augustine's own reasoning when it is at all consequential. It is the location of this justification/obligation of coercive force in any combatant or noncombatant resistance to the imposition of divine order in both Augustine and Ilyin that brings us to the discussion of holy war.

Holy War and Spiritual Warfare

As an essentially Augustinian doctrine of just war, Ilyin's solution to authorizing war absent the divinely-ordained authority of the tsar is much like that of Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099). It was Urban II who, in 1095,

⁵²⁸ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 112.

infamously called European Christendom to war against Muslims in the Holy Land with the pronouncement "*Deus vult!*," and thus initiated the First Crusade (1096–1099). From the beginning of Urban II's papacy, he was embroiled in an ongoing struggle with Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV over significant aspects of papal authority.⁵²⁹

It is therefore significant that when Byzantine Emperor Alexius I appealed to Urban II for support against the Seljuk Turks who had taken control of Jerusalem, Urban II called the European princes to war on the authority of God himself, bypassing the Holy Roman Emperor's temporal authority. Similarly, Ilyin frees the Whites (and himself) from reliance on the contingent authority of the tsar by presenting the idea of "resistance to evil by force *and the sword*" as an obligation directly to God rather than a duty to the emperor. Ilyin is more abstruse than Urban II, and unlike Urban, he was not trying to snub imperial authority, but to restore it. Nevertheless, he faced the same problem of authorizing coercive force without it. Ilyin's end is the same: he seeks to mount a war that does not require the authorization of a worldly ruler.

Once again, Eastern Orthodoxy, unlike the Western Church, does not acknowledge a theology of just war. Neither, therefore, does it need to distinguish between just war and holy war. Yet as scholar of religious ethics John Kelsay notes, by the end of the Middle Ages, Catholic theologians "made a strong distinction between just war, construed as war fought for approved political and moral purposes, and holy war, understood to be war fought because of difference in religion. Just war came to be approved, while holy war stood within a class of prohibited acts."⁵³⁰ Kelsay's historical example is instructive:

At the close of our period [i.e., early Sixteenth Century], Francisco de Vitoria could evaluate the claim of the Spanish emperor with respect to fighting against the indigenous peoples of the New World in such a way as to suggest that difference of religion, in and of itself, could never provide a just cause for war. Nor could the emperor authorize fighting based on a claim that dominion over the natives' land had been granted him by the Pope.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Before Urban II's reign, his predecessor Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) had excommunicated Henry IV three times in an attempt to induce the emperor to capitulate to his demands. In response, the emperor threatened to depose Gregory VII. Eventually, the emperor supported the election of pro-imperial antipope Clement III (r. 1080–1100). The emperor continued to support the sympathetic antipope through Gregory VII's papacy, through the brief papacy of Urban II's immediate predecessor Pope Victor III (r. 1086–1087), through Urban's own papacy, and through the papacy of his successor, Pope Paschal II (r. 1099–1118).

⁵³⁰ John Kelsay, "War (Just War, Holy War)," in Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, 1st ed. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 2034.

⁵³¹ Kelsay, "War (Just War, Holy War)," 2031–32.

The point of comparison here is Ilyin's claim that the "anti-spiritualism" of the Bolsheviks constituted an evil that must be resisted "by force and the sword." His definition of good as "spirituality and love" and evil as "anti-spiritual" is very much couched in the terms of religious difference, which were no longer considered justification for war in the Western Church as of the early Sixteenth Century.

Ilyin's definitions of good and evil, moreover, grant him enough latitude that "spiritual" good can just as easily be defined as faith over atheism as it can as monarchist pre-Revolutionary Russian Orthodoxy over any Christian or even Orthodox alternatives. This is especially important given the 1925 publication date of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*. The schismatic (and state-sympathetic) "Renovationist" or "Living" Church had begun forming three years earlier, and in 1923, the Soviet authorities sponsored the first Renovationist Council in Moscow, which, among other things, tried Patriarch Tikhon for his opposition to Soviet authorities. In Tikhon's trial, the Council resolved that he should be defrocked, and the patriarchate itself abolished. This did not directly affect the "Tikhonite" Church, which continued to operate, albeit illegally. However, when Tikhon died in 1925—the year Ilyin published *On Resistance to Evil by Force*—the Soviet authorities forbade the convocation of a Church Council, which effectively prevented the election of a new patriarch for almost 20 years. Not only was Ilyin, like Urban II, trying to declare a holy war without imperial authority, but he was also trying to do so without papal/patriarchal authority. Thus, the logic of holy war appeals to Ilyin for the very reasons that it appealed to Urban II, which are also the very reasons it was eventually prohibited in the Western Church.

Yet Ilyin's justification of coercive force is not limited to mere religious differences like those between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, Judaism, or Islam, nor even like the sectarian differences between the Orthodox and the Russian Old Believers. Rather, Ilyin also ascribes any atheistic opposition to his idealized view of symphonia as being in the service of preternatural Evil itself; he projects religious evil onto non-religion. According to Ilyin's reasoning, in rejecting spirituality (as Russian Orthodox Christianity), the Bolsheviks have aligned themselves with Evil in a war against God. Ilyin refuses to acknowledge any perspective outside his metaphysical paradigm. For this reason, *On Resistance to Evil by Force* is not only a call to holy war, but it is also an example of what is now popularly described as "spiritual warfare." The primary significance of the distinction between holy war (that is, a war against other people over religion) and spiritual warfare (that is, a war between spiritual good and evil) lies in the possibility of combining the two, as Ilyin does. A holy war, like Urban II's First Crusade, is a war between human belligerents over religious difference. Its rationale has to do with disparate truth claims: true god(s), true prophet(s), true doctrine(s), etc., in a battle among real people over avowed religious epistemologies. Spiritual warfare, by contrast, need not offer evidence of any real conflict; it assumes a priori that preternatural Evil is always locked in a celestial battle with the forces of Good. By combining the two, Ilyin both (1) derives his authorization from divine fiat and, (2) literally demonizes his opposition.

Strictly speaking, holy war represents an understanding of just war theology in which coercive force is justified on the basis of religious difference alone—conversion by the sword, as it were. For this reason, it was widely condemned in the Western Church by the end of the Middle Ages. Spiritual warfare, on the other hand, began as part of an ascetic religious thought world in which Christians see themselves as joining directly in the struggle against preternatural evil through prayer and self-denial. However, since its inception in Late Antiquity, spiritual warfare has become a framework for demonizing—often literally—individuals or groups who hold different worldviews, by attributing their refusal to capitulate and convert to the influence of Satan. This use of holy war combined with spiritual warfare is present from the very beginning of Ilyin's *On Resistance to Evil by Force*. In his preface, he includes the following dedication:

White warriors, bearers of the Orthodox sword,
volunteers of the Russian state's burden! In you there is
an Orthodox knightly tradition, you have established
your life and death in the ancient and right spirit of
service, you have maintained the banners of the Russian
warriors of Christian favor. I dedicate these pages to
your leaders. Let your sword be a prayer and let your
prayer be a sword!⁵³²

As such, I argue, in *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, Ilyin seeks not merely to justify, but also to sacralize violence on the basis of religious difference.

Though the term “spiritual warfare” is probably most familiar in the context of modern Evangelical Protestantism, the beginnings of such thinking can be found in numerous Christian ascetic texts going back to late antiquity. In its original context, it is a spiritual practice, in which prayer, fasting, abstinence, etc., are understood as defenses against the temptations of the Devil and his demons in one's personal path to salvation. The foundational text in that tradition is *Talking Back*, by Evagrius of Pontus (345–399 CE). Evagrius instructs desert-dwelling Christian hermits of late antiquity to “talk back” to demons who would tempt them with impure thoughts by reciting short prayers and specific verses from the Bible. A crucial point here is that as an ascetic practice, spiritual warfare did not initially project motives onto the actions of other *people*, but rather projected demons onto one's own spiritual weaknesses. Such “warfare” is repeatedly described as internal. By definition, ascetics have withdrawn from worldly affairs, including temporal war. Such laicization of what was originally an ascetic or monastic spiritual practice may be partially to blame for later populist political applications like Ilyin's.

Ilyin was certainly familiar with the idea of spiritual warfare. If nothing else, he would have known it from his interest in the writings of Theophan the Recluse (1815–1894), including, notably, *Unseen Warfare* (*Nevidimaia bran'*). As pointed out earlier in this volume, Ilyin was drawn to Theophan's

⁵³² Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 1.

ideas.⁵³³ Theophan wrote a number of original works of enduring interest. Yet Theophan's *Unseen Warfare*, which appeared in its first edition by 1886 (if not earlier)⁵³⁴ and was in its fourth edition by 1904,⁵³⁵ is a translation and adaptation of an earlier Greek rendering of a 1589 work entitled *Combattimento Spirituale* (*Spiritual Combat*) by a Venetian Catholic priest named Lorenzo Scupoli (c. 1530–1610). Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat* is considered a classic of spiritual writing of the Counter-Reformation period, to be compared with the *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) of Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556). The Greek translation from which Theophan worked had itself been created in the eighteenth century by an Orthodox monk named Nicodemus, who lived in the famous monastic settlement at Mount Athos in northeastern Greece. It was Nicodemus who had changed the title from *Spiritual Combat* to *Unseen Warfare* (Αόρατος Πόλεμος) when he combined it with another shorter work by Scupoli and translated it into Greek.⁵³⁶ Nicodemus' translation was quite faithful to the original, but Theophan made several changes in his Russian translation to bring the prescribed ascetic practices, which had been particularly Catholic, into line with Eastern Orthodoxy.

A clear distinction between holy war and spiritual warfare reveals what Ilyin intends in his notorious and oft-quoted phrase, "Let your sword be a prayer, and let your prayer be a sword!" Beginning with the second part of the quote, "let your prayer be a sword" is consistent with the ancient monastic conception of internalized spiritual warfare; it spiritually (that is, symbolically) weaponizes ascetic practices in an internal struggle with preternatural evil. Ilyin himself concedes the intended internality of the ascetic practice, when he writes:

nowhere it seems, is this internal resistance to evil developed with such depth and wisdom as that found in the ascetic teachers of Eastern Orthodoxy. Personifying the origins of evil in the image of immaterial demons, Anthony the Great, Mark the Ascetic, Ephrem the Syrian, John of the Ladder and others, teach tireless inner "battle" with "unseen" and "non-violent" "attached evil thoughts," and John Cassian explicitly points out that

⁵³³ "In regard to Russian influences, Listitsa mentions that, at that time among Ilyin's 'spiritual authorities ... were Pushkin, Gogol, Tyutchev, Dostoyevsky, a. K. Tolstoy, and Theophanes the Recluse." Thus, see also Yuri Listitsa, "Kratkiy biograficheskiy ocherk," *Naslediye russkogo filosofa I. A. Il'ina* (1883–1954), Moscow State University, <http://nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-ZHIZNEOPISANIE/zhizneopisanie-k-b-o.html>.

⁵³⁴ Feofan Nicodemus, *Nevidimaiã bran'*, *Universitetskaia tipografiia*, Moscow, 1886. This is the earliest reference to the text that I could find.

⁵³⁵ Lorenzo Scupoli, Nicodemus and Feofan, *Unseen Warfare: The Spiritual Combat and Path to Paradise of Lorenzo Scupoli* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 69.

⁵³⁶ Theophan, *Unseen Warfare*, 13.

“no one” can be deceived by the devil but one who “has chosen to yield to him the consent of his own will.”⁵³⁷

Yet the first part of Ilyin’s dedicatory injunction, “Let your sword be a prayer,” is an unambiguous example of holy war—one that sacralizes real violence against real people by turning killing into a religious obligation. In combining the two as Ilyin does so succinctly yet so thoroughly in his preface to *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, he is not merely prescribing an ascetic practice for resisting temptation on an individual soul’s path to salvation, nor is he merely calling for a holy war. Rather, by externalizing the internal battle of ascetic spiritual warfare and projecting preternatural evil onto his human adversaries, he literally makes them into “enemies of God.”⁵³⁸ Moreover, because God, as the source of justice, is ipso facto incapable of acting unjustly, Ilyin not only justifies, but also valorizes violence and war against evil in the name of religion. His combination of spiritual warfare and holy war drags non-religious and non-Orthodox epistemologies alike onto the fields of an Armageddon of his own making.

The utility of spiritual warfare in Ilyin’s poisonous combination—though perhaps not as apparent—is even more disturbing. Ilyin not only justifies, but also valorizes violence against Evil in the name of religion. Spiritual warfare pertains to right or justice in war (*ius in bello*),⁵³⁹ which dictates conduct once war has begun. In modern secular theories of just war, it is the latter set of principles of right or justice in war that defines war crimes as “unjust.” Yet whereas one is presumably concerned with the just treatment of non-combatants, excessive cruelty, terms for surrender, etc. in secular theories of right or justice in war, the notion of spiritual warfare relieves these obligations by dehumanizing one’s adversaries. One could hardly be expected to concern oneself with the possibility of unjust treatment of demonic forces. As Ilyin himself poses the problem, “If ‘mankind’ and the ‘evil in it’ are not the same, then is it not possible to act on a person so that this influence is beneficially transmitted precisely to the ‘evil’ that resides in him?”⁵⁴⁰ By combining holy war and spiritual warfare, Ilyin justifies the monarchist Whites and condemns the Soviet Reds in a perfect closed loop, with a zero sum. Moreover, in his sloganeering about swords and prayers, Ilyin blatantly contradicts his attempt to distinguish his ideas about “resistance to evil by force and the sword” from holy war, which sacralizes violence.

As mentioned above, much of the significance of a Russian Orthodox doctrine of just war lies in the fact that the concept does not originate with Ivan Ilyin, nor is it limited to his writings. Insofar as Ilyin’s philosophy consists of a religious justification of violence and authoritarianism, it is not Ilyin’s. This has bearing on scholarship and political commentary that seeks to situate Ilyin’s thought in Russian illiberal politics. Ilyin’s *On Resistance to Evil by Force* is paradigmatic, but not unique. It is not Ilyin’s philosophy with which we should be concerned, but rather that philosophical-

⁵³⁷ Ilyin, *Resistance*, 11, [emphasis in original].

⁵³⁸ See again Ilyin’s mobilization of the concept in element VIII, above.

⁵³⁹ The Latin *ius* carries the dual senses of both “right” and “justice” in the original.

⁵⁴⁰ Ilyin, *On Resistance to Evil by Force*, 19.

theological argument that Ilyin seeks to emulate. In the section that follows, I retrace the recent conversation about Ilyin's contemporary influence in Russia and existing analyses of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*.

If not Putin's Philosopher, then what?

Much of the current interest in Ilyin's thought by both scholars and political commentators is related to historian Timothy Snyder's discussion of the Russian philosopher in *The Road to Unfreedom* (2018) and in his related article in the *New York Review of Books* titled, "Ivan Ilyin, Putin's Philosopher of Russian Fascism" (2018).⁵⁴¹ Yet Snyder is not solely responsible for popularizing this estimation of Ilyin. It was Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn who had dubbed Ilyin "Putin's philosopher" in 2015.⁵⁴² In 2016, Mikhail Zygar, too, had connected Ilyin to Putin, writing, "The main source of Putin's contemplations [about building capitalism] was the philosopher Ivan Ilyin. Based on Ilyin's works, Putin placed the basic values of Russian society in this order: God, family, property."⁵⁴³ Shortly after the publication of Snyder's book in 2018, however, Marlène Laruelle cautioned that "Ilyin is not Putin's 'guru,' and that... Ilyin's ideological legacy in contemporary Russia is more complex than that of 'fascism.'"⁵⁴⁴ She stressed, "Ilyin has not become Putin's official ideological reference or 'Putin's philosopher.' Putin has quoted Ilyin on only five occasions (in 2005, 2006, 2012, 2013 and 2014); three of these were addresses to the federal assemblies and two to military audiences."⁵⁴⁵ Barbashin soon responded to Laruelle in another article, writing, "It is about more than just quotes here and there. Ilyin's books were recommended as a must read by two of the Kremlin's 'grey cardinals'—Vladislav Surkov and Vyacheslav Volodin."⁵⁴⁶

In the midst of this debate, ultra-conservative Russian publicist Egor Kholmogorov⁵⁴⁷ issued a breathless retort, claiming Barbashin and

⁵⁴¹ Timothy Snyder, "Ivan Ilyin, Putin's Philosopher of Russian Fascism," *New York Review of Books*, March 6, 2022, https://www.nybooks.com/online/2018/03/16/ivan-ilyin-putins-philosopher-of-russian-fascism/?lp_txn_id=1464986.

⁵⁴² Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, "Putin's Philosopher," *Foreign Affairs*, September 20, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2015-09-20/putins-philosopher>.

⁵⁴³ Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2017), 249.

⁵⁴⁴ Marlène Laruelle, "In Search of Putin's Philosopher: Why Ivan Ilyin Is Not Putin's Ideological Guru," Riddle Russia (blog), April 19, 2018, <https://ridl.io/in-search-of-putins-philosopher/>.

⁵⁴⁵ Laruelle, "In Search of Putin's Philosopher."

⁵⁴⁶ Anton Barbashin, "Ivan Ilyin: A Fashionable Fascist," Riddle Russia (blog), April 20, 2018, <https://ridl.io/ivan-ilyin-a-fashionable-fascist/>.

⁵⁴⁷ Kholmogorov called for the beating of any woman who would dare utter the word "sexism." See G. Tetrault-Farber, "Publicist Who Advocated Punching Women in the Face Named 'Russia's Sexist of the Year.'" *Moscow Times*, March 12,

Thoburn had “teamed up to dig into the history of Russian philosophy or—to be precise—in order to lynch Ivan Ilyin, one of the greatest Russian philosophers of the 20th century.”⁵⁴⁸ Kholmogorov’s defense of Ilyin is largely unremarkable, falling back on far-right Russian apologist tropes that Ilyin was not antisemitic, that he ultimately rejected the Nazi Party, and that he therefore could not have been fascist (as if Nazism were the only possible form of fascism). However, one thing he wrote stands out. Kholmogorov points to *On Resistance to Evil by Force* (rather than Ilyin’s posthumously-published *Our Tasks*, which receives a disproportionate amount of attention in the scholarship and punditry) specifically as evidence of Ilyin’s genius:

Ilyin’s own original philosophic output is also well known to philosophy connoisseurs, even though it does inspire a lot of argument. In particular, his famous treatise *On Resistance to Evil by Force* develops the philosophy of anti-pacifism. According to Ilyin, taking up the sword against evil is not only a realpolitik guideline ... but also a moral-philosophical postulate.⁵⁴⁹

In fact, Ilyin’s output is not well known to connoisseurs of philosophy. Until the recent rehabilitation efforts spearheaded by far-right Russian think tanks and Orthodox monarchist initiatives, he was all but forgotten. Yet Kholmogorov wants him to be perceived as credible—as respectable, Russian, and Orthodox. Kholmogorov sees Moscow’s then-current intervention in Syria as a realpolitik application of *On Resistance to Evil by Force*.⁵⁵⁰ He praises Ilyin’s justification for “taking up the sword against evil” as brilliant philosophy because it justifies war.

Kholmogorov points to what it is about “Ilyin’s philosophy” that attracts the Russian far right. First, it is more about *On Resistance to Evil by Force* than it is about than Ilyin’s posthumous *Our Tasks*. Second, it is about an ideology of holy war justified by divine will. It is about an immanentized eschaton without the possibility of conscientious objection or noncombatant immunity. Third, it is not specifically about Ilyin, except insofar as he provides a passable veneer of Russianness to ideas that are supposed to be anathema to Eastern Orthodoxy. It is about a crypto-Orthodox doctrine of just war that continues to be elaborated by other far-right Russian thinkers with or without reference to Ilyin (much less Augustine). Thus, I suggest that Kholmogorov’s particular enthusiasm for Ilyin as a philosopher of “anti-pacifism” frames the allure and utility of his writing to far-right Russian politics better than references to “Putin’s philosopher.”

2015, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/03/12/political-pressure-fears-as-russias-central-bank-set-to-cut-rates-a44709>.

⁵⁴⁸ Egor Kholmogorov, “The Costly Western Slander against Ivan Ilyin,” *Russkaya Istina*, December 17, 2015, <https://politconservatism.ru/thinking/the-costly-western-slander-against-ivan-ilyin>.

⁵⁴⁹ Kholmogorov, “Western Slander.”

⁵⁵⁰ Russia intervened into the Syrian Civil War beginning in September 2015.

As scholars and analysts engaged with Ilyin's role in right-radicalization in Russia, I suggest that we should not be thinking so much in terms of philosophy as of theology, nor should we be thinking about the problem as somehow originating with Ilyin or being specific to him. I suggest that we should focus on the hallmarks of Augustinian just war/holy war and the instrumentality of discourses of spiritual warfare in contemporary Russian politics. We should, however, also look for the rhetorical camouflage that Ilyin uses to obscure his debt to Augustine: compulsion vs. violence (or war), and what is necessary vs. what is just in war. Finally, we should bear in mind that what Ilyin was attempting to accomplish with *On Resistance to Evil by Force* is indeed more nuanced and complicated than "fascism." It was—and remains—a search for divine authorization for coercive violence, and, to the extent that Ilyin's end goal was something that scholars would recognize as fascism, it was to be Russian Orthodox Christofascism.

Chapter 3.

Reborn from the Ashes:

Ivan Ilyin's Ideological Return to Russia

Ivan Ilyin rose to preeminence in 2005, when his remains were reburied near those of General Anton Denikin in Moscow's Donskoi monastery and his grave visited by President Putin. Since then, the émigré thinker has been quoted by Vladimir Putin about ten times in his speeches, including in his September 30, 2022, address announcing the annexation of four regions of Ukraine. How did this come to pass? Can we retrace the steps of Ilyin's "intellectual return" to Russia? Who are the actors behind this rehabilitation? What is its scope? Which aspect of Ilyin's thinking is currently promoted? Which segment of the political and intellectual elite is concerned, and has this rehabilitation reached a broader audience? This chapter aims to answer these questions in order to offer a complex vision of Ilyin's rehabilitation.⁵⁵¹

Ilyin's Legacy in Emigration and in the Soviet Underground

The worship of Ilyin began among his closest circles of friends and disciples, such as his personal secretary Roman Zile. But it was the émigré professor and philosopher's attorney executor, Nikolai Pavlovich Poltoratsky (1921-1990), who played the central role in keeping Ilyin's memory alive.

Poltoratsky, the son of a priest, was born in emigration in Constantinople in early 1921. He was educated in Bulgaria and in Germany at the Higher School of Theology and Philosophy of Rattensburg. He is said to have met Alexander Kazem-Bek in the 1930s,⁵⁵² when he would have been a teenager living in Germany—thus, the two may have been connected by his parents' acquaintances during one of Kazem-Bek's trips to Berlin. During his time in Sofia, Poltoratsky began publishing anti-Soviet articles. In 1954, he graduated from the Sorbonne with a PhD entitled "The Philosophy of Russia's History in the Works of Berdyaev." We have no record of Poltoratsky mentioning having met Ilyin in person.



Nikolai Petrovich Poltoratsky.
Source: russianemigrant.ru

⁵⁵¹ A special thank to Ivan Sytin for his assistance with this chapter.

⁵⁵² Mireille Massip, *La vérité est fille du temps: Alexandre Kazem-Beg et l'émigration Russe en Occident* (Geneva: Georg Editeur, 1999).

Poltoratsky moved to the United States in 1955. He began working as a researcher at Brooklyn College, then taught in the Sovietology Department of Middlebury College, Vermont. He moved to Michigan State University in 1958, quickly becoming the director of the Russian program and then of the Slavic Studies program. He published in the main émigré journals, including *Russkaia mysl'*, *Novoe russkoe slovo*, *Vestnik RSKhD*, and *Vozrozhdenie*.⁵⁵³ He also authored several books on Ilyin.⁵⁵⁴ In 1956 Poltoratsky became a member of the Society in the Name of Ivan Ilyin (*Sodruzhestvo imeni professora Ivana Aleksandrovicha Il'ina*), launched in Zurich by Ilyin's widow, Natalia Ilyina, along with Zile, Konstantin Klimov, and Alexsei Kvartirov.⁵⁵⁵ Poltoratsky is said to have collaborated with anti-communist organizations,⁵⁵⁶ but the only evidence of this to have been found so far is his participation in the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the US.⁵⁵⁷

The first collection of Ilyin's works was produced by his disciple and secretary Zile, who was based after the war in Morocco before settling in Germany. According to Petr Bazanov, Zile "participated in the work of the ROVS, and contributed to the transfer of the archive of I. A. Ilyin to the Library of the University of Michigan."⁵⁵⁸ To that end, he notably compiled a list of pseudonyms that Ilyin had used throughout his career.⁵⁵⁹ But it was

⁵⁵³ Aleksandr Yermichev, "Nikolai Petrovich Poltoratskii" in *Russkaia Filosofiia. Entsiklopediia*. Izd. Vtoroe, Dorabotannoe i Dopolnennoe, ed. M.A. Maslina (Moscow, 2014), 488–89, http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_p/poltorackinipe.php.

⁵⁵⁴ Nikolai Pavlovich Poltoratsky, *I.A. Il'in i polemika vokrug ego idei o soprotivlenii zlu siloi* (London, ON, 1975); Nikolai Pavlovich Poltoratsky, *Monarkhiia i Respublika v vospriiatii I.A. Il'ina* (New York, 1979); Nikolai Pavlovich Poltoratsky, *Rossii i revoliutsiia. Russkaia religiozno-filosofskaia i natsional'no-politicheskaia mysl' XX veka. Sb. statei* (New York, 1988); see Yermichev, "Nikolai Petrovich Poltoratskii."

⁵⁵⁵ The Members of the Society were Prof. I. M. Andreev (USA), Prof. A. D. Bilimovich (USA), Prof. V. S. Ilyin (cousin of Ivan Ilyin, Venezuela), Prof. A. A. Swan (USA), Prof. P. D. Ilyinsky (USA), Archpriest Fr. Mitrofan Znosko-Borovsky (Morocco), E. E. Klimov (Canada), G. A. Alekseev (USA), G. V. Ofrosimov (Switzerland), F. A. von Schultess (Switzerland), Archpriest Fr. Sergei Shchukin (USA, Canada), G. V. Mesnyayev (USA), I. N. Goryainov (Germany), A. I. Buld (USA), M. A. and M. G. Deriugins (Austria), R.M. Trachtenberg (Switzerland), A. A. Tenson (Germany), A. N. Tsurikov (son of Ilyin's associate in the "Russian Bell" N. V. Tsurikov, Germany), and V. A. Boss (Switzerland).

⁵⁵⁶ "Poltoratskiy Nikolay Petrovich (1921–1990)," *Zarubezhje*.Narod.Ru, May 14, 2006, http://zarubezhje.narod.ru/mp/p_007.htm.

⁵⁵⁷ Evgenii Aleksandrov, *Russkie v Severnoi Amerike: Biograficheskii slovar'* (Kongress Russkikh Amerikantsev, 2005), https://vtoraya-literatura.com/pdf/aleksandrov_russkie_v_severnoj_amerike_biograficheskyy_slovar_2005_text.pdf.

⁵⁵⁸ Petr Bazanov, *Bratstvo Russkoy Pravdy* (Posev: Moskva, 2013), 123.

⁵⁵⁹ "Psevdonimy Professora I. A. Il'ina. Spisok, Sostavlennyi R.M. Zile, Soglasno Zapisi Il'ina," *Spetsproyekt Ivan Il'in*, accessed October 22, 2022,

Poltoratsky who became the main centralizing figure, collecting Ilyin's works from different sources and hosting them at the University of Michigan, while keeping in mind that Ilyin himself had bequeathed the works to Moscow State University—a wish that would be fulfilled a few decades later.

Among émigrés, Ilyin did not benefit from any special status except among NTS circles. He did inspire a large share of NTS pamphlets in the 1930s⁵⁶⁰ and during the Second World War, but his centrality to the movement diminished during the Cold War decades. Even today, Boris Pushkarev, the contemporary leader of the NTS, mentions Ilyin only in passing among other thinkers.⁵⁶¹

Outside NTS circles, Ilyin was not widely read compared to, for instance, Nikolai Berdyaev. Symptomatically, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn quoted Ilyin only twice, and very late in his career: first in his famous *Rebuilding Russia* (1990), with a quote on the spiritual life of the people being more important than territorial conquest,⁵⁶² and second in one of his last political texts, “Byt li nam, russkim?” (Will we, Russians, exist?) (1998), on the fact that the renewal of Russia cannot happen without conscience and faith.⁵⁶³ It is therefore probable that Solzhenitsyn read or re-read Ilyin at the time the latter was already being republished in post-Soviet Russia, but Solzhenitsyn cannot be counted as one of his promoters during the Cold War decades.

Within the Soviet Union, Ilyin does not seem to have been widely read among the main nationalist/conservative circles, even those interested in the émigré legacy. He was not mentioned in the so-called village prose (a movement of right-wing writers within the Soviet establishment) nor published by the main nationalist or major intellectual conservative newspapers of the 1960s–1980s, such as *Moskva*, *Nash sovremennik*, and *Molodaia Gvardiia*. But he was known among two groups: the dissident circles inspired by NTS and the monarchist milieu of the “Russian Party,” the nationalist and conservative lobby within the Soviet state apparatus.⁵⁶⁴

Within dissident circles, the most attracted to Ilyin's thinking was the All Russian Social-Christian Union of People's Liberation (VSKhON), the main

https://www.culture.ru/catalog/archiv_ilina/ru/item/book/pseudonimy-professora-i-a-ilina-spisok-sostavlenyny-r-m-zile-soglasno-zapisi-ilina.

⁵⁶⁰ See, for instance, their compilation of 1992, *Rannye ideinye poiski rossiiskikh solidaristov* (Moscow: Possev Verlag, 1992).

⁵⁶¹ Boris Pushkarev, “NTS. Mysl' i delo. K 80-letiiu NTS i 65-letiiu izdatel'stva ‘Posev,’” *Novyi zhurnal* 262 (2011).

⁵⁶² Sergey Ryapolov, “Ivan Il'in i Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.” *Zavtra*, April 8, 2015, <https://zavtra.ru/blogs/-ivan-ilin-i-aleksandr-solzhenitsyn>.

⁵⁶³ “Rossiiskaia vlast' prodolzhaet poiski novoi kontseptsii rossiiskoi gosudarstvennosti.” *Radio Svoboda*, 20 June 2008, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/452697.html>.

⁵⁶⁴ Nikolai Mitrokhin, “*Russkaia partiia*”: *dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953-1985 gg.* (Moscow: NLO, 2003).

dissident organization of the 1960s. VSKhON was composed of many young intelligentsia figures, among them several so-called “former people” (*byvshie*, children of aristocratic descent) who had been socialized at Leningrad State University. The VSKhON sought to create a Social-Christian ideology based on a form of Orthodox fundamentalism, calling for the creation of an anti-communist movement that would lead a clandestine war against the godless regime.



Ilya Glazunov.
Source: Wiki Commons

The VSKhON took from Ilyin the idea of the inevitability of the collapse of the communist state and its replacement by a Christian system.⁵⁶⁵ References to him in the VSKhON journal *Veche* become commonplace in the 1980s: an overview of Ilyin’s philosophy was published in 1981; “On Resistance by Force to Evil” in 1984; “World Principles of the Russian Revolution: Crisis of the Idea of Property” across several issues in 1985; and “Crisis of Atheism” in 1986.⁵⁶⁶ References to Ilyin continued in the 1990s: Vladimir Ivoilov, for instance, referred to Ilyin’s article “The Creative Idea of Our Future” and his notion that Russia’s rescue would come through the creation of a “Russian national chivalry” (*russskoe natsional’noe rytsarstvo*) as providing a model for VSKhON members.⁵⁶⁷

In the Russian Party circles, Ilyin was rarely quoted. Indeed, mentions of him were mostly confined to the memoirs of the monarchist antisemitic painter Ilya Glazunov (1930–2017). The latter’s uncle Boris Glazunov (approx. 1890s–1963) worked for the Nazi “Zeppelin Operation” in Soviet-occupied territories with Nikolai Rutchenko-Rutych (1916–2013). Both Boris Glazunov and Nikolai Rutchenko-Rutych were active in spreading Ilyin’s works among collaborationist forces during the first years of the war.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ “Zapiska Predsedatel’ia KGB pri SM SSSR v TsK KPSS o sude nad chlenami Vserossiiskogo Sotsial-Khristianskogo Soiuza Osvobozhdeniia Naroda,” VSKhSON, <http://vshson.narod.ru/zpkgb.html> ; Arkhimandrit Nikon Lysenko, “K 40-letiu programmy VSKhSON,” VSKhSON, <http://vshson.narod.ru/stati.html>.

⁵⁶⁶ *Veche: Nezavisimyi russkii al’manakh* (Munich, 1981–), Electronic Archive of Foreign Countries Named After Andrei Siniakovskii, accessed October 22, 2022, https://vtoraya-literatura.com/razdel_2158_str_1.html.

⁵⁶⁷ Vladimir Ivoilov, “Po belym kudriam dnia...” *Veche* 62 (1998), <http://vshson.narod.ru/pbkd.html>.

⁵⁶⁸ For an history of the Zepellin network and its Gatchina cell, see my chapter “The Russian Powerbrokers: Alexandr Kazem-Bek, the Chavchavadze, and the Gatchina Group,” *White Russians History*, 2022, https://whiterussianshistory.org/the_kazembeks.

Ilya Glazunov said he was introduced to Ilyin's writings by Rutchenko, whom he met in Leningrad in 1955. He explained that he was fascinated with Ilyin's article "On Resistance to Evil by Force" and took detailed notes on it because he feared carrying it home would result in its confiscation. The discursive line of Glazunov's memoir *Russia Crucified* almost entirely reproduces the NTS/Ilyin reading of history, including the most clichéd aspects: Lenin's sealed train having been funded by Germany; the Bolshevik leadership as secret Jews supported by Americans and Germans who sought to destroy Russia; and a tribute to General Vlasov, who defected to the Nazis.⁵⁶⁹

As seen from this brief overview, Ilyin was known by some in the anticommunist Soviet underground, but was not widely referenced in nationalist circles. Things changed dramatically with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

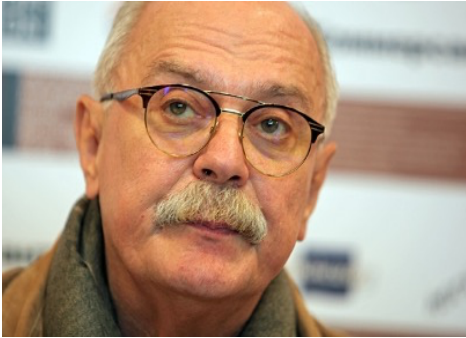
Ilyin's Post-Soviet Hagiographs

The perestroika years, which opened with Mikhail Gorbachev becoming General Secretary in 1985, radically changed the context in which memory of the émigré movement could be expressed. The process of reinstating anti-Bolshevik figures within Soviet culture took place fitfully prior to 1985; afterwards it exploded. An outpouring of information on Russian émigrés and their views occurred in parallel with Gorbachev's decision to open the archives and authorize the rewriting of some chapters of twentieth-century history. This resulted in radical change to the Soviet historical narrative and paved the way for the impressively quick reemergence of an émigré version of history.

Epitomizing that trend, in 1990 the Paris-based émigré publisher YMCA-Press, close to NTS, was allowed to organize an exhibition of émigré books at the Moscow Library of Foreign Literature, giving unheard-of access to previously prohibited émigré figures and narratives.⁵⁷⁰ Leonid Reshetnikov (1947), a senior Foreign Intelligence Service official connected to the Russian Party, published in 1990 the first-ever biographical article on the émigré thinker Ivan Solonevich (1891–1953), known for his argument that monarchy was the only viable and historically justified political system for Russia. But it was Ivan Ilyin who attracted the most interest in this new Russia thirsty for non-conformist views.

⁵⁶⁹ On Glazunov and Rutych, see Ilya Glazunov, *Rossiia raspiataia* (AST: Moskva, 2005), 25; Elena Oleinik, "Pisatel'-istorik okazalsia natsistskim posobnikom," *Fontanka.ru*, May 7, 2007, <https://www.fontanka.ru/2007/05/07/027/>; Nikolai Rutych, *KPSS u vlasti: ocherki po istorii Kommunisticheskoi partii, 1917-1957* (Frankfurt am Main: Posev, 1960).

⁵⁷⁰ "Istoriia sozdaniia doma russkogo zarubezh'ia imeni Aleksandra Solzhenitsyna," Dom russkogo zarubezh'ia imeni Aleksandra Solzhenitsyna, <https://www.domrz.ru/about/history/>.



Nikita Mikhalkov
Source: Wiki Commons

Film director Nikita Mikhalkov claims the paternity of the rediscovery of Ilyin. A member of the family that led the Russian Party during the Soviet era and intimately connected with émigré culture,⁵⁷¹ Mikhalkov has been the engine of the cultural rediscovery of the White past through its cinematographic production. In 1991, his small publishing house Trite released a brochure by Ilyin, which he presented to Aleksandr Rutskoi, then vice-president of Russia.⁵⁷² After the reading, Rutskoi began quoting Ilyin regularly, especially in his

political manifesto, "Political Credo of a Vice-President,"⁵⁷³ and was followed by Communist Party leader Gennadi Ziuganov. The fashion for Ilyin in conservative, or, as they were called in Russia, "red brown patriot" circles was launched.



Boris Nikolaevich Lyubimov
Source: Wiki Commons

Another central political figure of Ilyin's rehabilitation at that time was Boris Mironov (1951), cofounder of *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, then president of the Media Committee of the Russian Federation. Known for his nationalist and antisemitic views, Mironov led the Soviet Russia publishing house, which republished Ivan Ilyin, as well as 19th century conservative thinker Konstantin Pobedonostsev, Russian philosopher Konstantin Leontiev, and Vasily Shulgin, one of the central figures of Russia's White emigration.^[1] Mironov would later co-lead the extremist, National Great-Power Party of Russia (NDPR) along with Alexander Sevastyanov and Sergei Terekhov.

In more intellectual circles, Ilyin's first early popularizer outside conservative and nationalist circles was the theater critic Boris Nikolaevich Lyubimov (1947). It was he who, for the first time in the Soviet Union, published fragments of Ilyin's works outside of the samizdat world: these

⁵⁷¹ Cécile Vaissié. *Le clan Mikhalkov. Culture et pouvoirs en Russie (1917-2017)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2019).

⁵⁷² "Okaiannye dni Nikity Mikhalkova," *Novyi region*, March 30, 2015.

⁵⁷³ Aleksandr Rutskoi, "Sil'naia vlast' dlia demokratii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, February 13, 1992.

appeared in the journal *Teatral'naia zhizn'* (Theatrical Life) in 1989.⁵⁷⁴ Lyubimov, who is now the rector of the Higher Theater School named after M. C. Shchepkin, is also a member of the Board of Nikita Mikhalkov's Fund for Russian Culture (see below). The Lyubimov and Mikhalkov families have been friends for years; some unconfirmed rumors suggest that Mikhalkov is the godfather of Lyubimov's daughter, Olga Borisovna Lyubimova, who has been serving as Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation since January 2020.⁵⁷⁵ Olga Lyubimova has been publicly critical of her years at an Orthodox collegium and presents herself as liberal Orthodox.⁵⁷⁶ She has produced several films on Orthodox culture and worked for years in the Movies Department of the Ministry of Culture, allowing her to maintain a relationship with Mikhalkov.

After Lyubimov's republication of Ilyin in 1989, the rehabilitation became massive. Several articles devoted to his political philosophy were published by 1991; a ten-volume collection of his works was printed by 1993. These were followed by several conferences and a documentary film. This rapid rehabilitation was made possible by the merging of émigré supporters of the philosopher with ideological figures in search of a new political language. This merging is embodied by the figure of Yuri Lisitsa (1947).

Yuri Lisitsa was born in the Vinnitsa region of Ukraine and graduated from Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University (now Peoples' Friendship University of Russia) with a degree in Mathematics.⁵⁷⁷ Having achieved his Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences, he began studying forbidden religious philosophy in 1965 as part of the Pan-Russian Artistic and Scientific Restoration Center (*Vserossiiskii khudozhestvenno-nauchnyi restavratsionnyi tsentr*, VKhNRTs), a club around the Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Kadashi, one of the central neighborhoods of Moscow.⁵⁷⁸

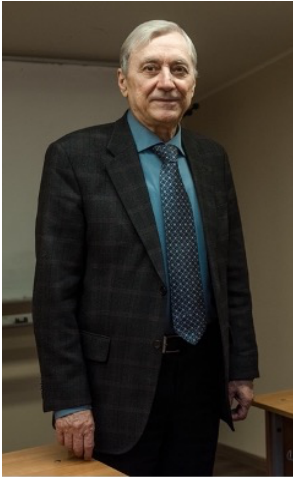
⁵⁷⁴ Kseniia Luchenko and Boris Liubimov, "Boris Liubimov: Tri glavnyye temy v zhizni — Tserkov', literatura i teatr," *Pravmir*, September 16, 2015, <https://www.pravmir.ru/boris-lyubimov-tri-glavnyie-temyi-v-zhizni-tserkov-literatura-i-teatr/>.

⁵⁷⁵ "Liubimov Boris Nikolaevich," Higher Theater School named after M. C. Shchepkin, <http://shepkinskoe.ru/person/lyubimov-boris-nikolaevich/>.

⁵⁷⁶ "Druzhba s Mikhalkovym, fil'my o pravoslavii i loial'nost' k erotike: chto izvestno o novom ministre kultury Rossii," *Spletnik*, January 22, 2020, <https://www.spletnik.ru/buzz/94361-chto-izvestno-o-novom-ministre-kultury.html>.

⁵⁷⁷ "Lisitsa Iurii Trofimovich," Orthodox St. Tikhon Humanities University, <https://pstgu.ru/people/lisitsa-iuriiy-trofimovich/>.

⁵⁷⁸ "Posle 1917 g.," Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Kadashi, <https://www.kadashi.ru/istoriya/posle-1917-g.html>.



Yuri Lisitsa
Source: VK.com

The Club was led by Pavel Korin, a leading restorator who was fascinated by icons and painted nostalgic landscapes of traditional Russia. Korin would later become one of the founders of the Russian Society for the Protection of History and Culture (VOOPIIK), an institution central to the attempt to fuse Soviet ideology and Russian nationalism and which would become the cradle of the future Pamiat, the school for Russian nationalist cadres.⁵⁷⁹

In the Kadashi circle, one could also find Vladimir Vorobiev (1941). Vorobiev's father, Nikolai V. Vorobiev, was one of Ilyin's students at Moscow State University. Vladimir was raised in a religious atmosphere and, after a first degree in mathematics and physics, decided in the 1970s to study at the Moscow Spiritual Academy to become a priest. During the perestroika years and the early 1990s, he was very active in Orthodox associative life. In 1992, he became the first rector of the newly created Orthodox St.

Tikhon Humanities University—where Lisitsa would later teach.⁵⁸⁰

Since then, Vorobiev has been one of the main engines behind the Russian Orthodox Church's (ROC) lobbying efforts to penetrate state institutions. He has worked, for instance, in the Coordination Council between the ROC and the Ministry of Education to get religious institutions accredited. He has also been an active member of the Synodal Commission for canonization.⁵⁸¹ The Commission launched the ROC's central memory policy of New Martyrs and Confessors (*novomucheniki i ispovedniki*), i.e., clerics persecuted for their faith by the Soviet repressions and whom the ROC had canonized.⁵⁸² The canonization of the New Martyrs and Confessors was a prerequisite for ROC reunification with ROCOR, which has glorified them since the early 1980s.

It is possible Lisitsa met in the same religious circle Sergei S. Khoruzhii (1941–2020), a fellow mathematician and specialist in hesychasm who

⁵⁷⁹ More on VOOPIIK in Nikolai Mitrokhin, *'Russkaia partiia'*.

⁵⁸⁰ "28 ianvaria—pamiat' ieromonakha Pavla (Troitskogo)," Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Kadashi, accessed October 22, 2022, <https://www.kadashi.ru/item/1739-28-yanvarya-pamyat-ieromonakha-pavla-troitskogo.html>.

⁵⁸¹ Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov': Sovremennoe sostoianie i aktual'nye problemy* (Moscow: NLO, 2004).

⁵⁸² The adjective "new" is inspired by the Byzantine use of the adjective to describe Orthodox martyrs under the Ottoman Empire, who are compared to the "old" martyrs who died under the Roman Empire.

would become one of the main names of contemporary Russian philosophy. Lisitsa discovered Ilyin in 1985 through Khoruzhii, who first gave him the second volume of *Our Missions*, which contains Ilyin's more moderate texts, before giving him the first volume, Ilyin's more politically engaged pamphlets.⁵⁸³

Lisitsa also met in this religious circle Viktor N. Trostnikov (1928–2017), a student of Khoruzhii and an apologetic of Ilyin, who would have a huge influence on Lisitsa. Likewise a mathematician by training, Trostnikov defended a PhD in philosophy and began publishing in dissident circles. One of his books, *Thoughts before Dawn* (*Mysli pered rassvetom*), was published in Paris in 1980, which caused him to lose his academic position in the Soviet Union. In 1983 he began participating in the restoration of the Danilov monastery, found a technician job there, and then moved in 1986 to the Sergiev Possad monastery to work as chief fireman. In 1988, the ROC invited Trostnikov and priest Dmitri Dudko (the latter could not make the trip) to travel to the US to attend a celebration of a millennium since the baptism of the Rus' organized by ROCOR. We do not have information on whom he met there, but he mentioned support from the ROCOR Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, and during a second trip in 1990 established contact with ROCOR New York Metropolitan Vitalii (Ustinov).⁵⁸⁴

The celebration of Russia's Christianization was a turning point in the state-church relationship: originally intended to be purely a Church affair, the celebration was transformed into a national event when Mikhail Gorbachev gave it state backing. In 1992, Trostnikov began working for the St Ioann Bogoslov Russian Orthodox University and became a professor of philosophy there.⁵⁸⁵

In 1990, taking advantage of the perestroika context, which was favorable for rediscovering émigré culture, the professor Aleksandr L. Dobrokhoto (1950)⁵⁸⁶ invited Nikolai Poltoratsky to the MGU Philosophy Department for a series of conferences. The latter died of a heart attack soon after his lectures in Moscow—but his legacy would be a long-lasting one. Indeed, at that conference, Poltoratsky met the whole circle of Russia-based Ilyin disciples: Lisitsa, Khoruzhii, and a young Aleksandr Iu. Kazakov (1965), who would later serve as a Latvian representative of Dmitri Rogozin's Congress of Russian Communities.⁵⁸⁷ The Congress of Russian

⁵⁸³ Iurii Lisitsa, "Moi vstrechi i besedy s Viktorom Nikolaevichem Trostnikovym," *Russkaia istina*, October 2, 2017, <https://politconservatism.ru/experiences/moi-vstrechi-i-besedy-s-viktorom-nikolaevichem-trostnikovym>.

⁵⁸⁴ Viktor Trostnikov, "Nado ob'ediniat'sia!" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, April 11, 2001, https://www.ng.ru/facts/2001-04-11/4_unification.html.

⁵⁸⁵ "Matematik, Filosof, Publitsist..." *Russkii Dom*, 2003, <http://www.russdom.ru/oldsayte/2003/200309i/20030915.html>.

⁵⁸⁶ "Dobrokhoto Aleksandr L'vovich," HSE, <https://www.hse.ru/org/persons/136024>; "Dobrokhoto Aleksandr L'vovich," MGU, <https://istina.msu.ru/profile/dobrokhoto50/>.

⁵⁸⁷ Iurii Lisitsa, "Pamiati ushedshego Sergeia Sergeevicha Khoruzhego;" "Kazakov

Communities was the first organization to develop a political program based on Solzhenitsyn's vision for Russia and to articulate the idea of Russians as a "divided nation" across the new post-Soviet borders that needed to be reunified.⁵⁸⁸ Kazakov would go on to supervise several pro-presidential youth movements, become the director of the Center for liberal-conservative politics named after Petr Stolypin and Petr Struve, and serve as a member of the public council of the ROC Department for Church-Society Interaction.⁵⁸⁹

At the 1990 conference, Dobrokhotoov also proposed creating an Ivan Ilyin Society and publishing his complete works.⁵⁹⁰ The idea of an Ilyin Society did not come to fruition, but the publication of Ilyin's complete works would become Lisitsa's life work. Indeed, after the conference, Lisitsa began publishing on Ilyin in different journals and tried—unsuccessfully—to get himself elected to Mossovet (Moscow municipality government) on a program based on Ilyin's ideas.

In 1992, Khoruzhii was invited to teach at Middlebury College in the US. There he met Irina Georgievna Ben-Chavchavadze, as well as her cousin, Alexei Evgenievich Klimov (1901–1991), who had cherished Ilyin's legacy during the whole emigration period. The Klimov's often hosted the Ilyins at their dacha in Koknese. Irina and Alexei were in correspondence with Ilyin and had very warm personal relations.⁵⁹¹ Alexei had emigrated to Canada after the Second World War, and went to study with Poltoratsky at Michigan on the recommendation of his uncle Konstantin Klimov, an old friend of the Ilyins back from their time in Latvia in the interwar period.⁵⁹² Khoruzhii told Klimov and Ben-Chavchavadze that Lisitsa, as the best specialist on Ilyin in Russia, should be the one charged with the republication of the philosopher's work in his motherland. Upon his return to Moscow, Khoruzhii handed over to Yuri Lisitsa a package from Klimov and Ben-Chavchavadze containing photographs and materials related to Ilyin.⁵⁹³

Aleksandr Iur'evich—biografiia," Viperson, <http://viperson.ru/people/kazakov-aleksandr-Iurievich>; "Kazakov Aleksandr," Kompromat.lv, <https://www.kompromat.lv/item.php?docid=personnel&id=20>; "Aleksandr Kazakov" Svobodnaia pressa, 2022, <https://svpressa.ru/persons/aleksandr-kazakov/>; "Kazakov Aleksandr (Iur'evich): osnovnye poniatia i terminy," Finam, <https://www.finam.ru/dictionary/wordf0369F/?page=1>.

⁵⁸⁸ Alan Ingram, "Broadening Russia's Borders? The Nationalist Challenge of the Congress of Russian Communities," *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (2001): 197–219.

⁵⁸⁹ "Kazakov Aleksandr (Iur'evich): osnovnye poniatia i terminy," Finam, <https://www.finam.ru/dictionary/wordf0369F/?page=1>

⁵⁹⁰ "Nasledie: Istoriia izdaniia pervogo v Rossii sobraniia sochinenii I.A. Il'ina," Nasledie Iliina, <http://www.nasledie-ilijina.srcc.msu.ru/NASLEDIE/nasledie-istorija-izdaniia.html>.

⁵⁹¹ Ilyin, *Pis'ma. Memuary*, 1946.

⁵⁹² "Aleksey Klimov," *Russkie Latvii*, 2018, <https://www.russkije.lv/ru/lib/read/alexis-klimoff.html>.

⁵⁹³ Lisitsa, "Pamiati ushedshego Sergeia Sergeevicha Khoruzhego."

Lisitsa gradually emerged as the leading one of Ilyin's rehabilitators.⁵⁹⁴ From 1993 to 1996 the publisher Russkaia kniga began publishing Ilyin's work under Lisitsa's leadership, with the support of a RGNF (Russian Humanities National Foundation) grant. Between 1998 and 2000, he benefitted from another grant from the RGNF—and possibly from other sources of funding—to edit the correspondence between Ilyin and Ivan Shmelev (1873–1950), an émigré writer famous for his idyllic recreations of the prerevolutionary past and a supporter of the collaborationist Vlasov army. This project allowed Lisitsa to access about 200 kg of Ilyin's writings sent from the US by Klimov.⁵⁹⁵ Klimov also introduced him to Tamara Poltoratskaya, who was then 85, and made Lisitsa Ilyin's executor attorney. After Ilyin's reburial (see below), Lisitsa continued to promote Ilyin to higher political circles. In 2008, for instance, to mark the 125th anniversary of Ilyin's birth, he edited a volume on *Ilyin's Teaching on Russia's Law, Power, and Social Culture (Uchenie I.A. Il'ina o prave, vlasti i sotsial'noi kul'ture Rossii)* validated by the Committee for Constitutional Legislation of the Council of the Federation⁵⁹⁶—led at that time by Alexander Torshin. Torshin, a member of Dugin's Eurasianist International Movement, now under the protection of Konstantin Malofeev, has become known for his role in the Russian interference in the 2016 elections and the Maria Butina case. Lisitsa is said to have been in touch, through Pavel V. Florensky (a professor at the Gubkin State University of Oil and Gas and grandson of the émigré philosopher Pavel Florensky), with senior hierarchs of the Church such as Tikhon and even Patriarch Alexii II.⁵⁹⁷

Since 2005, Lisitsa has been Head of the Department of Religious Studies at the Orthodox St. Tikhon Humanities University.⁵⁹⁸ The project of publishing Ilyin's complete works is now led by St. Tikhon University, with the support of its rector, Lisitsa's old friend Vladimir Vorobiev. In 2015, the project gained the official support of then-Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky, accompanied by funding from the ministry (see below). Promoting Ilyin's thinking has become a family project: Lisitsa's spouse, Olga Vladimirovna, has been transcribing Ilyin's correspondence and works as program manager of the Russian Cultural Foundation, while their son Andrei has also helped with the republication of Ilyin's works.

Ilyin Returns Home: The 2005 Reburial and Its Lobby

⁵⁹⁴ See "Bibliografiia: Issledovaniia tvorchestva I.A. Il'ina," *Nasledie Iiina*, <http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/bibliografiya/bibliografiya-3-3.html#l>.

⁵⁹⁵ Iurii Lisitsa, foreword to I.A. Il'in, *Sobranie sochinenii: Perepiska dvukh Ivanov* (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 2020), 7, https://imwerden.de/pdf/iljin_perepiska_dvukh_ivanov_tom1_1927-1934_2000__ocr.pdf.

⁵⁹⁶ A.I. Aleksandrov, G.P. Ivliev, and M.G. Rozinskii, eds., *Uchenie I.A. Il'ina o prave, vlasti i sotsial'noi kulture Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Soveta Federatsii, 2008), <http://council.gov.ru/media/files/41d44f243a6548f18bd7.pdf>.

⁵⁹⁷ Lisitsa, "Pamiati ushedshego Sergeia Sergeevicha Khoruzhego."

⁵⁹⁸ "Pravoslavnye vozobnovili 'Russkii kolokol. Zhurnal Volevoi idei,'" *iz.ru*, February 6, 2013, <https://iz.ru/news/544435>.

For Ilyin's supporters, the widespread republication of Ilyin's works in post-Soviet Russia was not enough. Instead, a loftier goal needed to be reached: the repatriation of the philosopher's remains to the motherland.

This commemoration genre has been established by Russian monarchist organizations and one of their leaders, count Zurab Chavchavadze, a relative of Georgy Ben-Chavchavdze, discussed in the first chapter.⁵⁹⁹ In 1991, Chavchavadze, a chairman of the Russian Nobility Assembly, mobilized Russian monarchists and business to return the remains of the Russian Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich from France to Russia. In 1995, Grand Duke's family was reburied at the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg.⁶⁰⁰

The idea that Ilyin can repeat the journey of the Grand Duke was made possible because Ilyin's supporters succeeded in closely associating Ilyin's legacy with that of General Anton Denikin: presenting Ilyin as "Denikin's philosopher" implied that the repatriation of the White leader would be meaningless if not accompanied by the repatriation of his ideologist. It seems reasonable to believe President Putin was more interested in repatriating the most famous leaders of the White movement—we know from informal sources that Putin allegedly read Denikin's memoirs⁶⁰¹—than their thinkers.



Marina Denikina-Gray

Source: Wiki Commons

The first voice to propose the repatriation of Denikin's remains was his daughter, Marina Denikina-Gray (1919–2005), who made this suggestion as early as 2001, just after Putin's arrival in power. She was then

⁵⁹⁹ Elena Chavchvadze, "Kakie Vozhdi I Kakaia Polemika Nuzhna Rossii?"

Russkaia Narodnaia Liniia, March 25, 2020,

https://ruskline.ru/opp/2020/03/25/kakie_vozhdi_i_kakaya_polemika_nuzhny_rossii

⁶⁰⁰ "Prakh Velikogo Knizia Upokoitsia v Petropavlovskom Nekropole," *Izvestiia*, April 29, 1992.

⁶⁰¹ See below Tikhon's excerpts.

offered Russian citizenship by the president himself.⁶⁰²

Denikina-Gray was a key figure connecting White Russian circles based in France with the French far right: her husband, Jean-François Chiappe, the scion of a collaborationist family, was one of the cofounders of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, a writer for the antisemitic newspaper *Rivarol*, and in charge of the French Association for Monarchist and Catholic Media.



Marina and her father, Anton Denikin,
near Sèvres, Paris, in 1933
Source: Wiki Commons

Denikina-Gray's voice was rapidly joined by that of Viktor Ivanovich Denikin (1952), at that time Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Central Federal District. Viktor Denikin presents himself as General Denikin's great-grandson, but the genealogy of the part of the Denikin family that remained in the Soviet Union is obscure and we could not verify this claim. According to Viktor Denikin, he is descended

from Ivan E. Denikin, the father of the White General.⁶⁰³ Viktor's father, Ivan I. Denikin, was a member of the Bolshevik Party and spent his entire career in the Soviet security services.

⁶⁰² "Generala Denikina perezakhoroniat v Moskve," *Grani.ru*, September 28, 2005, <https://graniru.org/Society/m.91048.html>

⁶⁰³ Andrei Polynskii, "Vernetsia li na rodinu prakh Generala Denikina?" *Russkii Dom* (blog), 2002, <http://www.russdom.ru/oldsayte/2002/200212i/20021221.html>.

Viktor Denikin and Marina Denikina-Grey are said to have met in Paris; he would be the one who would have asked her to write a letter to Putin with a request to transfer the remains of her father to his homeland.⁶⁰⁴ Viktor Denikin is a member of the Russian Nobility Assembly but has not publicly expressed any pro-White inclinations, presenting himself simply and uncontroversially as “a Russian officer serving the Fatherland.”⁶⁰⁵



Viktor Ivanovich Denikin
Source: redakciya2005.narod.ru

The reburial initiative was supported by the Moscow Nobility Assembly, headed by Prince Andrei Golitsyn, which joined the call for the reburial of White Generals Wrangel and Denikin under the Kremlin walls.⁶⁰⁶

In 2003, during his trip to New York (accompanied by Igor Schegolev and Bishop Tikhon, see below), Vladimir Putin began negotiating the return of Denikin’s remains with Metropolitan Laurus, the main ROCOR prelate. Other participants in the meeting included Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Bishop Kirill of San Francisco and Western America, and Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan. The main part of the meeting was held behind closed doors.⁶⁰⁷ As Denikin was buried in *St. Vladimir’s Cemetery* in Jackson, New Jersey, the reburial required the approval of ROCOR; this was part of the canonical reconciliation between ROCOR and ROC that would be officialized in 2007.

Putin’s meeting with ROCOR was advocated for and prepared by key figures within Russia’s reactionary and monarchist Orthodox movement: Konstantin Malofeev, Igor Shchegolev, and Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov).

⁶⁰⁴ “Podpolkovnik Denikin zashchishchaet glavkoma Denikina ot skandalala,” *Russkaja narodnaia liniia*. September 20, 2002, https://ruskline.ru/monitoring_smi/2002/09/20/podpolkovnik_denikin_zawiwaet_glavkoma_denikina_ot_skandala ; Polynskii, “Vernetsia li na rodinu prakh Generala Denikina?”

⁶⁰⁵ Polynskii, “Vernetsia li na rodinu prakh Generala Denikina?”

⁶⁰⁶ “Podpolkovnik Denikin zashchishchaet glavkoma Denikina ot skandalala.”

⁶⁰⁷ Aleksandr Soldatov, “Lavr dlia prezidenta. V SSHA glava Rossii vstretilsia s ierarkhami Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi Zagranitsei (RPTSZ),” *Compromat.ru* (blog), September 30, 2003, http://www.compromat.ru/page_13673.htm.



Konstantin Malofeev
Source: Wiki Commons

The “Orthodox oligarch” Malofeev has used his wealth to build the influential St. Basil Foundation and the channel Tsargrad, and has gradually become the main funder of a large segment of the nationalist/ultraconservative ecosystem in Russia, from the Novorossiia ideologists and warlords to tsarist nostalgists and the anti-abortion lobby.⁶⁰⁸ Malofeev referred to Ilyin in his book *Empire: Present and Future*, echoing the

philosopher’s call for military patriotism. He wrote:

“The further the war went in time and space, the more noticeably the national Russian instinct of self-preservation awakened, the stronger the determination of the Russian people to defend themselves from the enemy became, and the more the warring masses learned to obey the discipline of the national military High Command, not paying attention to the party regime,” the great Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin, who was in exile, explained in the Swiss press. “In the memories of the people about the First World War, the desertion from which turned into a terrible retribution that lasted for 25 years, the idea that this war must be loyally fought to the end won.”⁶⁰⁹

Malofeev’s patron, former Minister of Telecommunications Igor Shchegolev, was one of the initiators of the League for a Safe Internet, the precursor of Roskomnadzor, the state agency in charge of the censorship of Russian mass media, and a convinced monarchist. Metropolitan Tikhon leads the most ideological wing of the Moscow Patriarchate, which hopes to penetrate state institutions and innervate them with nationalist and reactionary content.

⁶⁰⁸ Marlene Laruelle, “Moving the Cursor Down: The Kremlin’s Moral Conservative Ecosystem,” in *Pål Kolstø*, Helge Blakkisburd, forthcoming.

⁶⁰⁹ Konstantin Malofeev, *Imperiia: Nastoiaščee i budushchee. Kniga 3* (AST: Moscow, 2022).

While the pro-White lobby was particularly active in advocating for the return of Denikin's remains, the question of Ilyin's remains was never forgotten by its supporters. Tamara Poltoratskaia first raised the issue of Ilyin's reburial back in 1995, stating, "As long as we are alive, we must rebury Ivan Alexandrovich at home."⁶¹⁰

In 2002 she asked Lisitsa to obtain the support of the Russian state and the ROC for the return of Ilyin's remains, as the lease on the land at the cemetery in Zollikon where he had been buried would end in 2005.⁶¹¹ Lisitsa appealed to Georgy Poltavchenko, at that time presidential envoy to the Central Federal District, to lobby for Ilyin's remains to be included in the Denikin reburial project.

Georgy Poltavchenko has been a central figure of the monarchist lobby. As part of the Ozero circles, Putin's first financial and political "cooperative" in St. Petersburg,⁶¹² Poltavchenko has been close to Vladimir Yakunin, dubbed the "Orthodox Chekist" and long the director of the state railway company, for years. The two men have gone on several Orthodox pilgrimages together and have collaborated on a number of infrastructure projects in the St. Petersburg municipality; Poltavchenko is also a member of Yakunin's Andrey the First Foundation. Poltavchenko has accumulated many honorifics in the rich network of Orthodox associations: he is a member of the Honorary Council of the Valaam monastery and head of the Honorary Council of the Russian Athos Society and of the Orthodox endowment fund Istoki.⁶¹³ Over the years, Poltavchenko has also become



Igor Shchegolev Source: Wiki Commons



Georgy Poltavchenko Source: Wiki Commons

⁶¹⁰ Anastasia Verina, "O perezakhoroneni ostankoi Generala AI Denikina i filosofa I.A. Il'ina," *Radio 'Radonezh*, January 14, 2013, <https://radonezh.ru/analytics/o-perezakhoronenii-ostankov-general-a-i-denikina-i-filosofa-i-a-ilyina-govoryat-yu-lisitsa-i-filip-47711.html>

⁶¹¹ Anastasia Verina, "O perezakhoroneni ostankoi Generala AI Denikina i filosofa I.A. Il'ina."

⁶¹² "Poltavchenko i Yakunin, 'ne sgovarivaia's', vstretilis' v Sankt-Peterburge," *Regnum*, September 1, 2011, <https://regnum.ru/news/economy/1441118.html>.

⁶¹³ "Poltavchenko, Georgii Sergeevich," TASS, 2022, https://tass.ru/encyclopedia/person/poltavchenko-georgiy-sergeevich?utm_source=google.com&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=google.com&utm_referrer=google.com; "Georgii Poltavchenko pripal k pravoslavnyim istokam Vladimira Yakunina," *Delovoi Peterburg*, August 19, 2013,

close to Konstantin Malofeev, who has now superseded Yakunin as *the* “Orthodox oligarch”⁶¹⁴ and is rumored to be very close to Metropolitan Tikhon.⁶¹⁵

The central institution driving the return of Ilyin home has been Mikhalkov’s Russian Cultural Fund. Originally launched by Raisa Gorbacheva in 1986 as the Soviet Fund of Culture and then led by famous specialist in Russian medieval literature Dmitri Likhachev, the Fund was transformed in 2016 into the Russian Cultural Fund led by Mikhalkov. With the goal of “preserving and promoting Russian culture,” it has become one of the central tools for funneling state funds to patriotic cultural projects. A whole section of the Fund focuses on the nation’s legacy, contributing to returning thousands of items, letters, archives, and paintings to the motherland, with an emphasis on the emigration legacy.⁶¹⁶ Mikhalkov himself is a member of the Presidium of the monarchist Russian National Council and published the *Manifesto of Enlightened Conservatism* (2010) to advocate for his conservative vision of Russia.⁶¹⁷ He is said to be quite close to Putin and to be able to meet with him regularly.⁶¹⁸

In parallel with the presidential decree on the reburials, the Fund launched an “Action of National Reconciliation” (*Aktsiia natsional’nogo prirereniia*) that emphasized the need to reintegrate the White past into the national pantheon to secure national reconciliation with the dominant Red memory. The Fund also released a film (“Denikin. Ilyin. Shmelev. The Long Road Home”) devoted to the reburials, as well as a two-part documentary series, “The Russian Choice” and “Russians without Russia” (which received a state prize in 2010), on the fate of Russian emigration.

The director of presidential programs at the Russian Culture Fund, Elena Chavchavadze (1947), has herself produced several television series that have sought to restore the image of the White émigrés and the Romanov emperors.⁶¹⁹ Her husband, Zurab Chavchavadze, is a central figure of the monarchist movement in today’s Russia and a protégé of Konstantin Malofeev. Of Georgian aristocratic descent, several of his family members were active members of the White movement and collaborated with Nazi

https://www.dp.ru/a/2013/08/16/Glava_RZHD_Vladimir_JAkunin?ShortUrl=a%2F2013%2F08%2F16%2FGLava_RZHD_Vladimir_JAkunin.

⁶¹⁴ “Poltavchenko, Kichedzhi i Divinskii poproshchalis’ s Darami volkhvov,” *Zaks.ru*, January 17, 2014, <https://www.zaks.ru/new/archive/view/120722>.

⁶¹⁵ “Dukhovnye deti Ottsa Tikhona,” *Moskovskii Komsomolets Pskov*, September 9, 2020, <https://www.mk-pskov.ru/social/2020/09/08/dukhovnye-deti-otca-tikhona.html>.

⁶¹⁶ “O Fonde,” Russian Cultural Fund, <https://rcfoundation.ru/about.html>.

⁶¹⁷ Nikita Mikhalkov, “Pravo i Pravda,” *Polit.ru*, October 26, 2010, <http://polit.ru/article/2010/10/26/manifest/>.

⁶¹⁸ “Mikhalkov – vlast’ gimn, BadComedian (English subs),” YouTube video, 1:49:08, posted by “vDud’,” November 27, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cjgu865ok>.

⁶¹⁹ “Rossiiskii fond kultury otmechaet den’ rozhdeniia novymi proektami,” Russian Cultural Fund, November 11, <http://rcfoundation.ru/33y>.

Germany.⁶²⁰ Zurab Chavchavadze has been working to promote connections with the European far right and the aristocratic realm and was long in charge of Malofeev's St. Basil lyceum, which trains a supposed "Russian new elite" in tsarist nostalgia.

Having gradually coopted all the key institutions in charge of distributing state funding for cultural production, in particular movies, Mikhalkov has produced several films devoted to Ilyin and the White cause. In 2011 he released a film presenting him as a major philosopher who should inspire today's Russia.⁶²¹ Since then, he has regularly invoked the image of Ilyin to bolster Putin's legitimacy—including in his 150-minute television documentary that aired in 2015 to celebrate Putin reaching fifteen years as Russia's leader.⁶²² On several occasions, Mikhalkov quoted Ilyin's sentence "One should live in the name of what one can die for," taken from Ilyin's 1915 essay "The Spiritual Sense of the War," which celebrates the sensemaking process of war. Mikhalkov quoted it in 2011 during an interview on the release of his film on Ilyin; and most recently during the war in Ukraine, to celebrate former criminals and prisoners who agree to fight on the Ukrainian battlefield.⁶²³

Reburial Logistics

⁶²⁰ See my chapter "The Russian Powerbrokers: Aleksandr Kazem-Bek, the Chavchavadze, and the Gatchina Group."

⁶²¹ "Russkii filosof Ivan Il'in," documentary, 47 minutes, 2011, <https://www.culture.ru/live/movies/1435/russkii-filosof-ivan-ilin>.

⁶²² "'Prezident.' Fil'm Vladimira Solov'eva," *Rossia* 24, April 26, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyNcbVuDJyA>.

⁶²³ "Nikita Mikhalkov predstavil geroem zakliuchennogo, kotorii byl prichasten k pytkam v tiurmakh," *Agentstvo. Novosti*, August 8, 2022, <https://t.me/agentstvonews/1091>.

On November 5, 2004, Vladimir Putin released a decree ordering the transfer of the remains of both the Denikin and the Ilyin couples. This was followed on March 31, 2005, by a governmental decree.⁶²⁴ The Moscow municipality, which was put in charge of the logistics, issued its own decree on the double reburials “with the aim of reinforcing the ROC blessings of the idea of civic peace in the society and national unity.”⁶²⁵ On June 22, 2005, a special commission was set up to return the remains to Russia. The Special Commission—headed by the director of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications, Andrei Iu. Vulf, and the Russian Cultural Foundation—included representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Presidential Administration, and the ROC.



Denikin's coffin in St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral, New York
Source: wikiwand.com

Denikin was buried in New Jersey, his wife in Paris, and the Ilyins in Switzerland, so three different jurisdictions—New York, Paris, and Geneva—were involved in this collective reburial. The Geneva authorities and the Zollikon commune representatives did not immediately give permission to move Ilyin's remains. All the work of preparing for the transportation of Ilyin's ashes was undertaken by the Russian embassy in Switzerland and its cultural attaché, Konstantin Nefedov. The Moscow municipality provided air transportation for the Russian delegation and for the remains of the Denikins and Ilyins to Russia, while oligarch Viktor Vekselberg's foundation, Link of Time (*Sviaz' vremen*), created in 2004 with the explicit goal of returning to Russia the cultural treasures that had left the country in the twentieth century, was asked to fund the reburial ceremony.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁴ Order of the President of the Russian Federation dated November 5, 2004 No. PR-1808; Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 31, 2005 No. MF-P44-1433; Iurii Luzhkov, Order dated September 1, 2005N 1696-“RPob okazanii sodeistviia v realizatsii kompleks meropriiatiu po podgotovke k perezakhoroneniia ostankov generala A.I. Denikina i filosofa I.A. Il'ina i ikh suprug v nekropole Donskogo monastyrya,” http://mosopen.ru/document/1696_rp_2005-09-01.

⁶²⁵ Luzhkov, Order dated September 1, 2005.

⁶²⁶ Tat'iana Ulanova, “Il'in den',” *Gazeta “Kul'tura,”* April 9, 2013, <https://pravoslavie.ru/60707.html>. See also “Arkhiv filosofa Ivana Il'ina vykupil Viktor Veksel'berg,” *Polit.Ru*, May 29, 2006, <https://polit.ru/news/2006/05/29/ilyin/>.



Reburial ceremony at the Donskoi monastery. Source: vk.com

On September 28, 2005, the Russian delegation arrived in the city of Zollikon. In Zurich, a memorial service was held for the Ilyins. Metropolitan Laurus, the First Hierarch of ROCOR, spoke at Ivan's Ilyin memorial service.⁶²⁷ That same day, a separate memorial service was held at the Znamensky Church in New York for Anton Denikin.⁶²⁸ On September 30, a memorial service was held for Denikin's wife in Paris' Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. On October

2, the coffins containing the remains of the Denikin and Ilyin families, stationed in Paris, traveled to Moscow, accompanied by Nikita Mikhalkov and Zurab Chavchavadze.⁶²⁹

On October 3, 2005, the reburial of the remains of General Anton Denikin, Ivan Ilyin, and their spouses took place in the necropolis of the Moscow Donskoi Monastery.⁶³⁰ The choice of the Donskoi Monastery was an intentional one: several families of the upper echelons of the aristocracy had chosen it for their burial vaults, and no Soviet figures were buried in the old necropolis, giving the monastery the image of a place embodying prerevolutionary Russia and protected from the shadow of communism. Ivan Shmelev was buried there in 2000. The Donskoi Monastery's anti-

⁶²⁷ Verina, "O perezakhoroneni ostankov Generala AI Denikina i filosofa I.A. Il'ina;" "Sobytiia: Perezakhoronenie," *Nasledie Iliina*, <http://www.nasledie-iljina.srcc.msu.ru/NIVC-site%20Iljina-SOBYTIJA/sobytiia.html>. A stenogram of his speech is available at: "Epistle of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, on the Reburial of the Remains of General Anton I Denikin and Ivan A Ilyin," *News from the Dioceses*, October 2, 2005, <https://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/01newstucture/pagesen/news05/denikonp-oslanie.htm>.

⁶²⁸ Evgenii Umerenkov, "Russkaia smuta nakonets zavershilas'" *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, September 30, 2005, <https://www.kp.ru/daily/23587.4/45039/>

⁶²⁹ "Rossiiskaya delegatsiia vyetela v SShA i Shveitsarii dlia uchastiia v perenesenii na rodinu ostankov A.I. Denikina i I.A. Il'ina," *Pravoslavie.ru*, September 28, 2005, <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/news/050928112726.htm> ; "The Delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia Returns from Escorting the Remains of General Denikin and Ivan Ilyin," *News from the Dioceses*, October 7, 2005, <http://www.synod.com/01newstucture/pagesen/news05/denikininru.html> ; "Prakh Denikina vernulsia v Rossiui," *Lenta.ru*, October 3, 2005, <https://lenta.ru/articles/2005/10/03/denikin>.

⁶³⁰ "Prakh Denikina vernulsia v Rossiui."

Soviet image explains why Nobel Laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn explicitly asked to be buried there too.

Along with Vladimir Putin and Patriarch Alexii II, the following figures participated in the ceremony: from the Russian political sphere, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, Georgy Poltavchenko, then-Minister of Culture and Mass Communications Alexander Sokolov, and Andrei Iu. Vulf; from the Church, Patriarch Kirill and then-Father Tikhon; and from the civilian realm, Marina Denikina-Gray, Nikita Mikhalkov, Elena and Zurab Chavchavadze, Tamara Poltoratskaya, Yuri Lisitsa, and Alexei Denisov, a TV documentary journalist for the All-Russian State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company who had produced documentaries about Ilyin.

Denisov worked for Soviet state television and produced a documentary on the Romanovs as early as 1989. Between 1993 and 1995 he took the lead on a new documentary series called “Russkii mir” (Russian World, written in the prerevolutionary alphabet) celebrating Russia’s imperial past. In the 2000s he screened several films commissioned by Mikhalkov, such as “Russian Emigration (*Russkii iskhod*, 2002) and “Ilyin’s Philosophical Testament” (*Zaveshchanie filosofii Il’ina*, 2005). Since 2013 he has been chief editor of the state channel History.⁶³¹

A few months later, in 2006, Poltavchenko and the Russian Cultural Foundation initiated the transfer of Ilyin’s archive to Moscow State University. Vekselberg’s spokesman, Andrei Shtorkh, declared: “Georgy Poltavchenko, who was involved in the return of the archives, turned to us with a request to help. We provided some financial assistance through the Link of Times fund.”⁶³² The Fund spent US\$60,000 on this endeavor. The archives were solemnly received by Moscow State University in November 2006.

The concluding phase of this national reconciliation occurred in 2009 with the inauguration of a modest memorial to White soldiers on the territory of the Donskoi Monastery to replace a chapel that was never built.



Reburial ceremony at the Donskoi monastery
Source: vk.com

⁶³¹ “Denisov Aleksei Grigor’evich,” *Rus.Team*, 2021, <https://rus.team/people/denisov-aleksej-grigorevich>.

⁶³² Verina, “O perezakhoroneni ostankov Generala A.I. Denikina i filosofa I.A. Il’ina.”

⁶³³ Putin inaugurated it by depositing some flowers on the Denikins', the Ilyins', and General Kappel's graves; he also visited those of Ivan Shmelev and Alexander Solzhenitsyn.⁶³⁴



Metropolitan Tikhon
(Shevkunov)
Source: Wiki Commons

Tikhon, who has been a driving force behind Denikin's and Ilyin's rehabilitation, commented on Putin's interest in conservative thinkers shortly after the President's second visit to Donskoi:

All of them—Denikin, Shmelev, Ilyin—were not just extraordinary personalities, but also had a special influence on the fate of Russia. Vladimir Vladimirovich, as we walked through the cemetery, spoke of Denikin's memoirs. In his memoirs, he also wrote about plans to dismember Russia. After all, even his comrades-in-arms from the White movement suggested that he could share territory with the interventionists. But Denikin always categorically rebelled against such plans. He believed that

forces hostile to Russia would always seek to "Balkanize" it. By the way, Ilyin also wrote "What the Dismemberment of Russia Promises the World." And he wrote it at a time when Soviet power was on the rise and it was difficult for anyone to imagine the possibility of collapse. All these people have a lot in common. A tragic fate. Ilyin, for example, was arrested in 1922 for the sixth time and sentenced to death. If not for the deportation, if not for his departure on the "philosophers' ship," he would have been shot. Shmelev's beloved son was shot by the Bolsheviks. In addition to their tragic fate, they were Christians who wholeheartedly served the country and the people. Although each of them, like any person, probably could not avoid mistakes. But they served sincerely.⁶³⁵

⁶³³ "Архив философа Ил'ина длia России выкупил Виктор Вексельберг;" "Новости Первого канала о возвращении архива И. Ил'ина," YouTube video, 0:36, posted by "RFK-TV," November 17, 2011, <https://youtu.be/0w4DI4OkWg8>.

⁶³⁴ Putin's visit can be seen in a short video at https://youtu.be/52_AvQk6crY.

⁶³⁵ Boris Klin, "Arkhimandrit Tikhon: 'Oni byli khristiane, bezzavetno sluzhivshie strane i narodu,'" *Izvestiia* (blog), May 26, 2009, <https://iz.ru/news/348931>.

Tikhon implicitly drew a clear parallel between Russia, at risk of dismemberment by Western intervention during the civil war, and today's Russia, also threatened by the West. Tikhon has indeed specialized in historical analogies, also visible in his instrumentalization of Byzantium and in his key role in erecting the historical park "Russia, my history". His 2008 pseudo-documentary film "The Destruction of an Empire:



The "White corner" at Donskoy monastery
Source: Facebook

Lesson from Byzantium" compared Byzantium to Putin's Russia, framing the two states as facing the same eternal external enemies—the West (with the historical analogy to Western Crusades) and terrorism (with the historical analogy to the Islamic conquest of Byzantium)—as well as domestic enemies (oligarchs and liberal forces).⁶³⁶



Putin's visit to the Denikins' and Ilyin's graves
Source: Facebook

The recreational historical park "Russia, my history" is promoted as a living textbook, with visitors passing through three exhibition halls, devoted to Russia's first dynasty (the Ryurikids), the Romanovs, and Soviet history, respectively. The park designers took their inspiration from multimedia technologies, combining many visual elements—photos, videos, and animations—with infographics and short texts. The exhibitions thus aim to offer not a research-based

product, like a conventional museum, but a visual experience with widespread popular appeal. The project seems to be primarily targeting schoolchildren, with the goal of shaping the youngest citizens' views of national history, and a broad audience. It embodies this ideologically-loaded "applied history," in which every revolt against the tsars is framed as a "color revolution."⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ See Irina Papkova, "Saving the Third Rome: 'Fall of the Empire,' Byzantium and Putin's Russia," in *Reconciling the Irreconcilable*, ed. Irina Papkova, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences, Vol. 24 (Vienna, 2009), http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=131&Itemid=125.

⁶³⁷ Author's observation, Moscow, June 2019.

Ilyin's New Postmortem Life in Russia

The 2005 double reburial demonstrated the pro-White lobby's success at getting Ilyin officially recognized as the philosophical embodiment of the White emigration. But how has that recognition had a domino effect, both upward, toward the elites and the higher echelons of the political elites, and downward, toward public opinion?

At the Highest Echelons of the State

One way to explore the elite-level impact of Ilyin's rehabilitation is to see how often and in which contexts Putin has quoted Ilyin. The Russian President mentioned him on several occasions: three times around 2005–2007, then in 2012 and 2014, and in a third phase in 2021 and 2022. It is interesting to see which excerpts from the works of the émigré philosopher have been selected by his team of advisors and ghost writers, and with what messaging.

In 2005, in his address to the Federal Assembly, Putin declared:

The great Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin wrote that "State power has its own limits defined by the fact that it is authority that reaches people from outside... State power cannot oversee and dictate the creative states of the soul and mind, the inner states of love, freedom, and goodwill. The state cannot demand from its citizens faith, prayer, love, goodness, and conviction.... It cannot regulate scientific, religious, and artistic creation."⁶³⁸

In his address one year later, Putin declared, "Reflecting on the basic principles on which the Russian state should be built, the well-known Russian thinker Ivan Ilyin said that the calling of soldier is a high and honorable title and that the soldier 'represents the national unity of the people, the will of the Russian state, strength and honor.'"⁶³⁹

In 2007, attending a session of the State Council, Putin quoted Ilyin's sentence "Knowledge without educating heart and soul is one of the most dangerous social phenomena, dangerous for a healthy sense of justice."⁶⁴⁰ In 2012, during his third presidential campaign, Putin published an article in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* devoted to the nationalities question in which he referred to Ilyin: "Do not eradicate, do not suppress, do not enslave other people's blood, do not strangle a foreign and heterodox life, but give everyone a breath and a great Motherland, keep everyone, reconcile everyone, let everyone pray in their own way to work in one's own way,

⁶³⁸ Aleksandr Kukolevskii, "Kak tsitirovali Ivana Il'ina," *Kommersant'*, May 29, 2006, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/677438>.

⁶³⁹ Kukolevskii, "Kak tsitirovali Ivana Il'ina."

⁶⁴⁰ Vladimir Soloveichik, "Putina i Poltavchenko vdokhnovliaet natsist," *Skepsis*, March 5, 2013, https://scepsis.net/library/id_3511.html.

and to involve the best from everywhere in state and cultural construction.”⁶⁴¹

In December 2014, the Russian president once again quoted Ilyin’s *Our Tasks* during his address to the Federal Assembly: “He who loves Russia should wish freedom for it; above all, freedom for Russia as such, for its international independence and self-sufficiency; freedom for Russia as a unity of Russian and all other ethnic cultures; and finally, freedom for the Russian people, freedom for all of us: freedom of faith, of the search for truth, creativity, work, and property.”⁶⁴²

At the Valdai summit in October 2021, the President was asked by Piotr Dutkiewicz, Professor at Carleton University, “which Russian thinkers, scholars, anthropologists and writers do you regard as your closest soul-mates, helping you to define for yourself the values that will later become those of all Russians?” To which Putin replied:

You know, I would prefer not to say that this is Ivan Ilyin alone. I read Ilyin, I read him to this day. I have his book lying on my shelf, and I pick it up and read it from time to time. I have mentioned Berdyaev, there are other Russian thinkers. All of them are people who were thinking about Russia and its future. I am fascinated by the train of their thought, but, of course, I make allowances for the time when they were working, writing and formulating their ideas. The well-known idea about the passionarity of nations is a very interesting idea. It could be challenged—arguments around it continue to this day. But if there are debates over the ideas they formulated, these are obviously not idle ideas, to say the least.⁶⁴³

The fact that the President began with Ilyin as the central reference seems to confirm that the émigré ideologist occupies a privileged place in what Putin reads or claims to be reading. But Putin seems more personally engaged when it endorses theories of “passionarity,” which refer to Lev Gumilev,⁶⁴⁴ a name he has mentioned since the early 2000s.

Last but not least, Putin has referred to Ilyin twice in 2022 in the context of the war. First, in June, during a youth forum on ecology in Kamchatka, he mentioned “a citation from his friend,”⁶⁴⁵ in fact the above-mentioned

⁶⁴¹ Soloveichik, “Putina i Poltavchenko vdokhnovliaet natsist.”

⁶⁴² “V Poslanii Putin vernulsia k filosofu Il’inu—ideologu Belogo dvizheniia,” *Life.Ru*, December 4, 2014, <https://life.ru/p/146358>.

⁶⁴³ Vladimir Putin, “Valdai Discussion Club meeting,” October 21, 2021, <https://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66975>.

⁶⁴⁴ Mark Bassin, *The Gumilev Mystique. Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

⁶⁴⁵ “Vizit Putina na Kamchatku: glavnye zaiavlenie prezidenta,” *TVTs*, September 5, 2022, <https://www.tvc.ru/news/show/id/249045>.

sentence by Ilyin promoted by Nikita Mikhalkov on several occasions.⁶⁴⁶ Second, in his infamous speech of September 30, 2022, recognizing the pseudo-referendums organized in the four Ukrainian regions under occupation and their annexation by Russia, Putin once again referred to Ilyin, this time directly:

And I want to close with the words of a true patriot Ivan Ilyin: "If I consider Russia my Motherland, that means that I love as a Russian, contemplate and think, sing and speak as a Russian; that I believe in the spiritual strength of the Russian people. Its spirit is my spirit; its destiny is my destiny; its suffering is my grief; and its prosperity is my joy."⁶⁴⁷

We can see from these excerpts that references to Ilyin are made in a very trivial manner: obviously the most problematic ideological components of Ilyin's thought, namely his pro-fascist stances, as well as his White engagement and visceral anticommunism are ignored and not integrated into the pantheon of citations selected by the presidential administration. Instead, the chosen quotes focus on state power being limited, on military commitment and readiness to die for a cause, on morality, on patriotism and national unity, on Russia being free from international pressure, and on being a "true patriot"—nothing that is genuinely specific to Ilyin's thinking and that could have been quoted from many other Russian thinkers.

One can therefore conclude that Ilyin's officialization in Putin's speeches has to be decoded as a two-layer strategy: first, promoting him at the highest levels with consensual and common-sensical quotations about Russia, and second, letting a circle of "the initiated" interpret Ilyin's place in the state pantheon as a pro-émigré, anti-Soviet flagship.

Ilyin quickly became a fashionable rhetorical device for the Russian political landscape for all those wanting to showcase some vague intellectual-history knowledge and demonstrate ideological loyalty. Reference to Ilyin's works has spread among members of the presidential administration and United Russia. In his official capacity as Kremlin Deputy Chief of Staff, Vladislav Surkov has referenced Ilyin three times. In 2006, during a speech at the United Russia cadres' school, he quoted Ilyin: "When the collapse of the communist system becomes a *fait accompli* and true Russia starts to revive, the Russian people will realize who they are without a governing stratum. Of course, this stratum will be temporarily occupied by sedentary and transient people, but their presence will not resolve the issue."⁶⁴⁸ And then one year later, during another lecture on

⁶⁴⁶ "Putin rasskazal molodym ekologam o smysle zhizhni vo vremia voyny," *Agentstvo. Novosti*, September 5, 2022, t.me/agentstvovosts/1243.

⁶⁴⁷ Vladimir Putin, "Signing of Treaties on Accession of Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and Zaporozhye and Kherson Regions to Russia," September 30, 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/69465>.

⁶⁴⁸ Aleksandr Kukolevskii, "Kak tsitirovali Ivana Il'ina," *Kommersant*, May 29, 2006.

Russian political culture, he cited Ilyin's abstract formula: "Russian culture is the contemplation of the whole."⁶⁴⁹

As studied by Mikhail Suslov,⁶⁵⁰ in the mid-2000s Ilyin was quoted broadly by United Russia Chair Boris Gрызлов,⁶⁵¹ by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev,⁶⁵² by Attorney General Vladimir Ustinov,⁶⁵³ and by Ivan Demidov, then a key figure in the party, trying to promote a "Russian project" (in the ethnonationalist sense of Russian, *russkii*) as the new ideological foundation of the regime.⁶⁵⁴ Yet one cannot speak of a long-term, recurrent strategy of promoting Ilyin to Russian political and bureaucratic cadres at the time Surkov was deputy chief of the Presidential Administration (1999–2011). Surkov has been the most innovative *éminence grise* of Putin's reign, funding myriad ideological projects and supporting any form of pro-state framing, including popular art and art house, so it is doubtful Ilyin has any specific importance for him. Following this first outburst connected to the reburial, Ilyin has remained a point of reference for some political figures referring to Russian conservatism such as Gрызлов, who stated in 2010 that Ilyin's precepts were central to United Russia's ideology, or Iurii Shuvalov, then first deputy prime minister, who coedited a book on Russian conservatism in which references to Ilyin came in second only to those to Struve.⁶⁵⁵



Vladimir Medinsky
Source: Wiki Commons

Under Viacheslav Volodin, it seems the Presidential Administration distributed Ilyin's main work, *Our Tasks*, as well as Berdyaev's *Philosophy of Inequality* and Vladimir Soloviev's *Justification of the Good*, to regional governors and senior members of United Russia in early 2014.⁶⁵⁶ But more constant supporters of Ilyin have been Vladimir Medinsky, Minister of Culture from 2012 to 2022, and his entourage.

Between 2015 and 2018, the publication of Ilyin's complete works by Lisitsa was funded directly by the

⁶⁴⁹ Viktor Shenderovich, "Il'in i OMON," *The New Times*, June 18, 2007.

⁶⁵⁰ Mikhail Suslov, *Putinism – Post-Soviet Russian Regime Ideology*, forthcoming. The next five footnotes are from his research.

⁶⁵¹ Boris Gрызлов (ed.) *Vektor Rossii: Razmyshleniia o putiakh razvitiia Rossii* (Moscow: Zimin, 2007).

⁶⁵² Dmitry Medvedev, "Predislovie," in Il'in, *Puti Rossii* (Moscow, 2007).

⁶⁵³ Kukulevskii, "Kak tsitirovali Ivana Il'ina."

⁶⁵⁴ Ivan Demidov, *Kommersant*, November 12, 2007.

⁶⁵⁵ Boris Gрызлов, "Voprosy ideologii Edinoi Rossii," 2010, <http://gryzlov.ru/index.php?page=publications&id=311>.

⁶⁵⁶ Elizaveta Surnacheva, "V poiskakh mudrosti," *Kommersant' Vlast'*, January 20, 2014, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2383840>.

Ministry of Culture, before being moved to the Likhachev Institute (see below). In 2019 Medinsky participated in the presentation of a new collection of Ilyin's unpublished works, *The New National Russia. Essays, 1924-1952* (*Novaia natsional'naia Rossiia. Publitsistika 1924-1952*), edited by Lisitsa and his son Andrei.⁶⁵⁷ Medinsky also re-quoted Ilyin's sentence about loving Russia and wishing it freedom that Putin had quoted in 2014.⁶⁵⁸ In 2021, at another book launch, this time of Ilyin's *On Russia's Revival and Renewal* (*O vozrozhdenii i obnovenii Rossii*), Medinsky, then advisor to the president and director of the Russian Military-Historical Society, quoted the philosopher as saying, "The matter of preservation requires, above all, a heightened and inexorable sense of responsibility."⁶⁵⁹

Medinsky's former Deputy Minister, Vladimir Aristarkhov (1969), is also a fervent proponent of Ilyin. Aristarkhov graduated from the University of Marxism-Leninism before making his career inside the presidential party United Russia, becoming a member first of its political council and then of its presidium. He also headed the Moscow branch of the Young Guard, the presidential party's youth movement.⁶⁶⁰ Aristarkhov defends a White reading of Russian history. He is a member of the Presidential Council for Cossack Affairs⁶⁶¹ and joined (with Medinsky) the Renaissance (*Vozrozhdenie*) Foundation, which aims to restore pre-revolutionary place names, including by installing plaques to White Generals.⁶⁶²



Patriarch Kirill
Source: Wiki Commons

⁶⁵⁷ "'O vozrozhdenii i obnovenii Rossii' I.A. Il'in. Prezentatsiia dvukhtomnika trudov filosaifa i publitsista," YouTube video, 1:14:03, posted by "Rossiiskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo—RVIO," September 22, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoiW2cFkluc>.

⁶⁵⁸ "Prezentatsiia sbornika trudov Ivana Il'ina," Rossiiskaia gosudarstvennaia biblioteka, May 26, 2019, <https://www.rsl.ru/ru/all-news/prezentacziya-knigi-filosaifa-ivana-ilina>.

⁶⁵⁹ Elena Iakovleva, "V Rossii vyshel novyi dvukhtomnik Ivana Il'ina," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, September 22, 2021, <https://rg.ru/2021/09/22/v-rossii-vyshel-novyi-dvuhtomnik-ivana-ilina.html>.

⁶⁶⁰ "Aristarkhov Vladimir Vladimirovich," Rus.Team, accessed October 22, 2022, <https://rus.team/people/aristarkhov-vladimir-vladimirovich>.

⁶⁶¹ "Rasporiazhenie Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 31.07.2012 g. No. 352-rp," President of Russia, July 31, 2012, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/35844>.

⁶⁶² Some sources state that both "owned a share" in the charter capital of the fund. At present, however, neither Aristarkhov nor Medinsky are listed among the founders of the fund. Those listed include Elena Chavchavadze, Konstantin

As Medinsky's deputy, Aristarkhov was a central architect of the increasing ideological limits imposed on Russian culture. He coauthored the 2013 "Fundamentals of Russian Culture Policy" (*Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki*), which celebrates Russia's "special path" as a unique civilization and calls for cutting funding to works that espouse "anti-Christian, anti-Russian (*anti-russkie*) and anti-Russian (*anti-rossiiskie*) ideas."⁶⁶³ Yet like Medinsky, Aristarkhov was careful not to embrace a radical Orthodox reading of Russian culture, refusing, for instance, to boycott the film "Matilda," denounced by Orthodox radicals as blasphemy (the film depicts a love affair between Nicholas II and a ballerina). He also opposed the demands of both Tikhon and Malofeev's St. Basil Foundation to explicitly mention the ROC as playing a special role in Russian culture, replying that Russia is a secular state.⁶⁶⁴

At the Ministry, Aristarkhov was in charge of the Department of Cultural Heritage, in which role he supervised the digitization of Ilyin's archives, which are now available on the culture.rf portal.⁶⁶⁵ In 2016, he was among those who rejoiced at Donald Trump's election.⁶⁶⁶ In 2018, Medinsky appointed Aristarkhov (who had got himself in trouble over some financial scandals and conflicts of interest⁶⁶⁷) director of the prestigious D.S. Likhachev Russian Research Institute of Cultural and Natural Heritage. In

Zatulin, Sergey Markov, Maxim Shevchenko, Valentin Lebedev, Pyotr Multatuli, Vladimir Lavrov, and others. As such, the "Vozrozhdenie" can be described as a union of right-wing nationalists and monarchists. See:

<https://medium.com/@mbkmedia/сечин-в-рясе-как-тихон-шевкунов-стал-главным-идеологом-российской-реакции-fd30c88467f>; "Fond

"Vozvrashchenie," ZChB, accessed October 22, 2022,

https://zachestnybiznes.ru/company/ul/1107799005511_7729441327_FOND-VOZVRAShENIE.

⁶⁶³ Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kulturnoi politiki," Kremlin.ru,

<http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d526a877638a8730eb.pdf>.

⁶⁶⁴ "Predstaviteli RPTs predlagaiut zafiksirovat' v 'Osnovakh gosudarstvennoi kulturnoi politiki' osobuiu rol' pravoslaviia," SOVA Center, September 26, 2014, <https://www.sova-center.ru/religion/news/authorities/religion-general/2014/09/d30271/>.

⁶⁶⁵ "Sbornik neizdannykh proizvedenii filosa Il'ina predstavili v Moskve,"

Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, May 27, 2019,

https://culture.gov.ru/press/news/sbornik_neizdannykh_proizvedeniy_filosofa_ilina_predstavlen_v_moskve/.

⁶⁶⁶ Igor Molotov, "Kul'turnaia peregrazhka: V Rossii predlagaiut ob'iavit' nedeliu Russko-Amerikanskogo Edinstva." Russia Today (blog), November 9, 2016.

<https://russian.rt.com/russia/article/331697-v-rossii-predlozheniye-nedelya-usa>.

⁶⁶⁷ "Vladimir Aristarkhov naznachен direktorom Rossiiskogo instituta kulturnogo i prirodnogo nasledii imeni Likhacheva," Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, September 12, 2018,

https://culture.gov.ru/press/news/vladimir_aristarkhov_naznachен_direktorom_rossiiskogo_instituta_kulturnogo_i_prirodnogo_naslediya_im/.

that role, Aristarkhov has been supervising the republication of Ilyin's entire work in 44 volumes coordinated by Yuri Lisitsa.⁶⁶⁸



Vladimir Aristarkhov
Source: Vk.com

Last but not least, Patriarch Kirill has referred to Ilyin on several occasions, often in conjunction with excerpts from the Bible and mostly to insist on Russia's religious mission. In 2013 at the 17th World Russian People's Council, he mentioned, for instance, Ilyin's definition of the nation as "an organized unity of spiritually solidary people" after having quoted the Book of John.⁶⁶⁹ In 2018, to celebrate the 1,030th anniversary of the Baptism of the Rus', Kirill

explained Russia's identity as "fidelity to the Gospel. [Russia] strove to arrange its life by what the thinker Ivan Ilyin called 'kissing the Cross,' that is, ardent love for the Lord and reverence for the Redeeming Sacrifice made by Him. Despite the complex vicissitudes of history, despite all the mistakes, deviations and even falls, the main thing for our people has always been the service of Divine truth and standing in the truth."⁶⁷⁰

And in 2022, for the 1,160th anniversary of Russian statehood in Velikii Novgorod, Kirill declared, "The outstanding Russian thinker Ivan Ilyin correctly wrote that a healthy statehood is impossible without a sense of one's own spiritual dignity. The spiritual dignity of our people is inextricably linked with the Orthodox faith, in which the ancestors drew inspiration and courage to overcome difficulties, to go forward in spite of all trials."⁶⁷¹

We can therefore see that references to Ivan Ilyin have indeed penetrated some state circles, with the Russian philosopher being quoted by Putin himself, Patriarch Kirill, and a group of high-level figures such as Medinsky and its entourage. Yet Ilyin's outreach to broader circles has remained limited.

⁶⁶⁸ "Vladimir Aristarkhov naznachén direktorom Rossiiskogo instituta kulturnogo i prirodnogo nasledíia imeni Likhacheva."

⁶⁶⁹ Kirill (Gundyaev), "Solidarnost'," *Grebnevskii Khram Odintsovskogo Blagochíniia Moskovskoi Eparkhii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi* (blog), 2022, http://www.odinblago.ru/o_smlah/144.

⁶⁷⁰ "Messazh Sviateishego Patriarkha Kirilla i Sviashchennogo Sinoda Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi arhipastýriam, kliru, monashestvu iushchim i mirianam v Sviazi s 1030-letiem kreshcheniia Rusi," Russian Orthodox Church in Canada, July 14, 2018, <https://www.orthodox-canada.com/ru/message-on-the-1030th-anniversary-of-the-baptism-of-rus/>.

⁶⁷¹ "Velikii Novgorod 21 sentiabria stal tsentrom torzhestv v chest' 1160-letia rossiiskoi gosudarstvennosti," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, November 4, 2022, <https://www.ng.ru/content/articles/750086/>.

What Public Reception for Ilyin in Today's Russia?

Looking beyond Russia's political and cultural elite, does Ilyin's legacy resonate with the broader public? Without a doubt, Russian public opinion has no knowledge of the ideological intricacies and debates between intellectuals and receives state propaganda through other means, mostly television. The Integrum database, which encompasses the whole of the Russian media landscape, shows that Ilyin has not been mentioned once by the main political talk-show hosts, like Vladimir Soloviev and Olga Skabeeva.

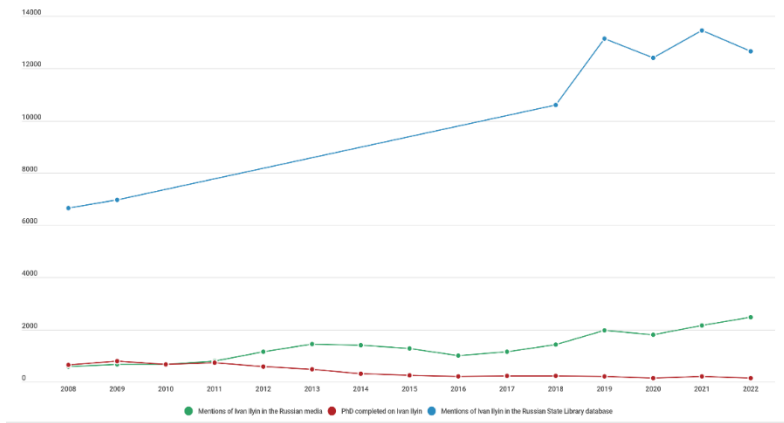
Likely, the only project led by the pro-Ilyin movement to speak to a broad audience has been the historical park "Russia, My History". It opened in 2013 at Manezhnaia exhibition hall, near Red Square, before finding a home at the trade show and amusement park VDNKh. The park has been a commercial success: as of 2022, about 20 versions of the original one located in Moscow have opened in major cities across Russia. The state agency for tourism, Rosturism, has included the exhibition in its program for tourist groups—and since 2016, the Ministry of Education and Science has recommended a visit to the exhibition for school pupils as part of their history classes, for students in higher education institutions, and for future teachers of history enrolled in pedagogical institutes.⁶⁷²

The success of the project lies in its unique combination of a reactionary reading of Russian history, on the one hand, and an ultra-modern medium for its transmission, on the other. At the Moscow park, the Romanov section—the most ideological—takes an openly monarchist stance, systematically presenting the Russian tsars as wise heads of state. Any attempt to question their autocratic power is condemned as a plot concocted by Russia's enemies, external and internal. Ilyin features prominently in the banners that are displayed in each exhibition rooms.

Yet, with the exception of the historical park, Ilyin's works do not reach a broad audience. If we look at the Integrum database that gathers all Russian media, we see that mentions of Ilyin remain minimal, at a few hundred a year, and have even decreased since his reburial. The flare for Ilyin touches mostly academic circles, with an increase in PhD dissertations either fully or partially related to his work, and a major increase in academic publications (Figure 1 below).

⁶⁷² Anna Pushkarskaia and Oleg Gorjaev. "Rossiiskuiu istoriiu izlozhat v 25 parkakh," *Kommersant*' (blog), February 13, 2017. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3218554>.

Figure 1. Mentions of Ivan Ilyin in Russian media and academic publications, 2008-2022



Source: Compiled by author based on Integrum, Russian State Library and PhD databases.

Conclusion

As we can see from this overview of Ilyin's rediscovery during the Cold War decades and in today's Russia, his rehabilitation is led by a group of enthusiastic supporters who see Ilyin as the philosopher of the White movement. This group of supporters is closely connected to émigré networks and to the NTS legacy, as well as to Soviet-era religious dissidents, as evidenced by Lisitsa's trajectory. For this group, Ilyin's main contributions to Russian philosophy are his hardline anti-Communist stance, his Christian theology, and the inspiration he drew from a fascist tradition reinterpreted through an Orthodox lens.

Yet at the state level, the embrace of Ilyin has been more common-sensical, taking from him citations that could have come from more or less any other Russian philosopher. The presidential administration, as well as Putin himself, have built a much more plural pantheon of ideological references in which Ilyin is a central but not exclusive figure. This spreading of Ilyin's works by his supporters is undoubtedly oriented "upward" to the inner circles of elites around Putin, with very little time and energy spent trying to promote it "downward" to a broader audience. While Ilyin remains unknown and unpromoted to the Russian general public, he has been officialized as the flagship of a hardline anti-Soviet and reactionary segment of the Russian elite.

For those studying the Russian political regime, it has become difficult not to see the name of the Russian thinker Ivan Ilyin (1883–1954) being increasingly mentioned as an influence on the Kremlin's worldview. How has such a relatively obscure Russian émigré philosopher gained such apparent prominence? What is the exact place of the émigré thinker in the Kremlin's ideological makeup?

Anyone who might attempt to dig deeper to answer these questions would be challenged by the paucity of available resources. It is therefore time to delve seriously into the topic of Ivan Ilyin—his biography, his thinking, and his post-mortem rehabilitation—to offer readers an analytical view of this key but largely unstudied member of Russia's ideological pantheon.

The “Ilyinist” faction at the Kremlin does not dominate the whole state structure. Neither has it been able to promote Ilyin to a broader audience, nor to make his works part of the new indoctrination mechanisms put in place since February 24, 2022. Rather, it is aimed mostly at speaking to the elites, not to the Russian population at large. But it has succeeded at making a Russian fascist sympathizer calling for a just war against enemies of the White cause a central figure of the Russian state pantheon.